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스포츠 매니지먼트 석사 학위논문

An Exploratory Study on Ecuadorian Fan  
Motivation for Interacting with  
Professional Soccer Teams through  
Social Media

에콰도르 축구 팬의 소셜미디어를 통한 프로 팀과의  
상호작용에 대한 탐색적 연구

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## **Abstract**

# **An Exploratory Study on Ecuadorian Fan Motivation for Interacting with Professional Soccer Teams through Social Media**

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What better place to be an absolute fan where you are allowed to express yourself as most as you can than Social Media? Nowadays, sports organizations do not just have traditional media to engage fans. The advances on technology has opened the opportunity for innovation and strategies to engage fans through new media.

Social media, one type of new media, is an excellent tool for fans to be in touch with their teams; accordingly, it is an important source for sports

organizations to better understand fan motivations and develop a powerful fan relationship (Stavros, Meng, Westberg, & Farrelly, 2014).

This study extends prior research on fan motivation and contributes to the arising research on social media by exploring what motives sport fans for interacting on the Facebook Pages of the three most popular Professional Ecuadorian Soccer Teams. The findings showed that fans employ five motives when they interact through this social networking service, these are: passion, hope, self-esteem, camaraderie, and gratitude. Moreover, this study indicates the importance of interaction between consumers (sport fans) and sports organizations, which is the beginning of the engagement process to reach and maintain successful relational exchanges, better called relationship marketing.

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**Keywords** : Fan Motivation, Sport Marketing, Social Media,  
Interaction, Relationship Marketing, Professional Soccer

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# **Chapter 1. Introduction**

## **1.1. Research Background**

The growth and evolution of social media has impacted every industry, and it is not the difference in sports where the diverse types of social media platforms provide to sports managers, fans, athletes, coaches, and educators a fast, easy, and accessible vehicle of communication medium, which opens the opportunity to make a good digital environment for engagement. In the next lines, it is described how social media is growing, its importance for companies, business, and how technology is making easier the access to internet, to end with a short background of Ecuadorian soccer and the evolution of Facebook.

For a company, it is easier to focus on the needs of an individual local consumer but it is not in a global market with many customers located around the world, here is when social media shows up its features. Social media allows conversations of millions of people available instantly and in a searchable and filterable format. This interaction is the very core of service-dominant logic.

According to Tapscott (2009), business needs the Net Generation-in more ways than one. The Net Generation “‘is the foundation for the next three decades of employment and leadership,’ according to Randall Hansen,

founder of Quintessential Careers, one of the oldest and most comprehensive career development sites on the Web.” (p. 157). He thinks that the Net Generation is going to be challenging because will show to smart companies how to collaborate in ways that today has become more cognitively complex, such as team-based work, social skills, and the pressures of time. He added “as work becomes more mobile, it depends less on geography and more in technological competence.” (p. 157). Lastly, in his sixth chapter’s book about the net generation in the workforce provides a seven guidelines for managers about talent and work, in which stated that companies should use new tools as wikis, blogs, social networks, jams, telepresence, tags, and so on to rethink the management process.

The challenge is to find ways of measuring the value of social media, as an example, there are many sports organizations that have made fan pages to improve the consumer-industry relationship. One of the examples it is in motor racing, the Formula E Championship for electric cars introduced the FanBoost, where fans vote for their favorite driver to have a power boost in a race (FIA Formula E, 2016). The chief executive of the Formula E Holdings, said in an interview to The Telegraph<sup>1</sup>: “Through social media, fans are having a real impact on the result of a race. It’s no longer 100pc

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.telegraph.co.uk>

about the skill of the driver and performance of the car. It's also about fans' input." (Agag, 2015).

Moreover, technology allows fans to interact more within their teams even in live time with some innovative ideas. For instance, some football stadiums, such as Liverpool's Anfield and Manchester City's Etihad Stadium, offer to fans via Wi-Fi more commercial activity during the games through their phones and tablets. Another example, according to Sutura (2013):

Cowboy's Stadium in Dallas, Texas, Gillette Stadium in Foxboro, Massachusetts, provides fans with a specialized application known as "Patriots Game Live." This new application "gives fans with smart viewing devices four live camera feeds of the game they are watching, as well as the NFL RedZone channel, providing highlights and live action from every game in the NFL," which, in many ways, is a direct accommodation to the millions of fantasy sports owners. (p. 169).

Nowadays, some companies have the common tendency of treating customers as "friends" and turning consumers into "prosumers", this is called prosumerism. Tapscott (2009) said that "prosumerism is more than an extension of mass customization, customer centricity, or any of other terms that boil down to companies making basic products and letting customers tweak the details" (p. 208). In other words, social networks are viewed as a relationship-building exercise.

From Ecuador to South Korea, the world is filled up with fans. They are the lifeblood of professional sports because they consume sports. According to Atkearney.com (2011), in a study of sports teams, leagues, and federations, they said that the global industry is worth between US\$480-620 billion, including infrastructure construction, sporting goods, licensed products, and live sports events. Moreover, Pwc.com (2011) in its second edition of outlook for the sports industry predicts the global sports revenues will grow up to US\$145.3 billions over the period 2010-2015, at an annual compound growth rate of 3.7 percent. Not far from this approximation, Statista.com (2016) in its website shows the total revenue of global sports market from US\$107.52 billion in 2006 to US\$145.34 billion in 2015 (in billion U.S. dollars), in other words it is an increase of US\$37.82 billion in a total of ten years.

In an industry of this size and with sports fans everywhere supporting and spending their time and money, it is important to understand what influence their expectations, behavior, and spending patterns to maintain and cultivate the relationship marketing. Sports fandom has become an important and increasingly widespread phenomenon due to how fans have changed in qualitative ways with the emerge of technologies (Andrews & Carrington, 2013). For instance, the top 13 tweets that

generated most impressions<sup>2</sup> (in billions) by sporting events in 2015 on Twitter.com (2015) were 1. Copa America with around 14 billion, 2. March Madness with around 9.1 billion, 3. Women's World Cup with around 9 billion, 4. Wimbledon with around 8 billion, 5. NBA Finals with around 6.8 billion, 6. Rugby World Cup with around 6.8 billion, 7. Tour de France with around 5.3 billion, 8. French Open with around 4.1 billion, 9. U.S. Open with around 3.5 billion, 10. Mayweather vs. Pacquiao with around 2.7 billion, 11. Super Bowl XLIX with around 2.5 billion, 12. World Series with around 1.9 billion, and 13. Cricket World Cup with 1.4 billion. This statistic shows how social media is being developed at a rapid pace to help increase sports fan interactivity with almost every aspect of sports from anywhere in the world. As Sutera (2013) wrote in his Final Thoughts:

With the increased level of access social media gives anyone with a smart device to almost any aspect of popular sports culture, sports fans are no longer content to remain on the sidelines and operate as passive viewers. Social media has made it possible for fans to cross the virtual barriers that separate them from the sports they love and allows them to express themselves to a worldwide audience. (p. 176).

We can conclude what has motivated fans to use social media platforms is the proliferation of internet. However, as a communication medium is still relatively new in most parts of developing countries and

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<sup>2</sup> Twitter defines an "impression" as how many times a tweet is seen online, both on Twitter and off.

therefore represents a revolution. For both, the developed and the developing countries, the internet is transforming the ways in which people communicate. It has made communication easier, and in some cases, possible. According to Rivera (2009), the introduction of the Internet has been the avenue to a faster, more powerful and more economic communication medium that is transforming society, culture and governments. The increase in internet users, households with computers, mobile cellular telephones, smart TVs, and so on. play an important role to develop marketing strategies and deliver messages to consumers. The digital and information revolution is changing the way the world learns, communicates, does business, etc. As an example, the advances in technology allow that today's smartphones, tablets, and game machines have computer power equivalent to that yesterday's computers and provide a similar range of functions.

In Latin America and Caribbean, the internet has penetrated to an unprecedented number in the last years. Looking up the statistics from The World Bank Group (2016) of internet users per 100 people, in Latin America and Caribbean (developing countries only) shows that from 2006 to 2014 has grown in a rate of 27.1 per 100 people. In other hand, Ecuador with a total population of 15.90 million in 2014 with an upper middle

income, it has increased the use of internet, from 2006 to 2014, of internet users per 100 people of 23.1 rate. Comparing with one of the top developed country, United States of America, that has a total population of 318.9 million in 2014 and a higher income, it had a rate of internet users per 100, from 2006 to 2014, of 18.5. Indeed, we can see that Ecuador as a developing country in Latin America and Caribbean in this data has increased its digital interaction per 100 people against United States of America in 4.6 rate (23.1-18.5).

The most popular sport over the world is football, and it is not the exception in a South American country as Ecuador, according to MapsofWorld.com (2016). Since the 2002 FIFA World Cup Korea/Japan, Ecuador has participated in three FIFA World Cups (2002, 2006, and 2010). “La Tri”, Ecuadorian National Team nickname, had its best performance in 2006 FIFA World Cup Germany ended in the twelve position, according to the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (2016). Ecuador may not have much FIFA World Cup<sup>3</sup> experience, but their teams have been semifinalists many times in the “Copa Libertadores de América”, South America’s premier club football tournament organized by CONMEBOL (South American Football Confederation). Moreover, Liga Universitaria de

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<sup>3</sup> It is the international championship of the members of FIFA every four years

Quito, which is one of the popular soccer teams in Ecuador, won the “Copa Libertadores de América” and classified to the 2008 FIFA Club World Cup Final against Manchester United. This helped to the popularization and commercialization of soccer in Ecuador, also the increase of national players going to play abroad in well-known teams as well. For example, Antonio Valencia in the English Premier League<sup>4</sup> club Manchester United since 2009 and with an international career since 2005, Felipe Caicedo in “Reial Club Deportiu Espanyol de Barcelona” playing in “La Liga”<sup>5</sup> since 2014 and with an international career since 2006.

Lastly, Facebook launched as a student network in 2004 for college students to then adds high school students by a process validated through institutional e-mail accounts. In 2006, it was so popular that allowed any user to join it. Continuously, Facebook until November 2007 introduced ‘Facebook Groups’ where people can settle small group communication to share common interests and express their opinions.

Later on, Facebook added an option that regulates institutional profiles; such as celebrities, brands or business. The Facebook ‘Pages’, also known as ‘fan pages’, are defined as:

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<sup>4</sup> Professional and primary football competition of England

<sup>5</sup> Highest division of Spanish Football



Pages for businesses, brands and organizations to share their stories and connect with people. Like profiles, you can customize Pages by publishing stories, hosting events, adding apps and more. People who like your Page and their friends can get updates in News Feed. (Zuckerberg, 2016).

Facebook extended its reach by allowing commercial organizations to create pages and on average for December 2015, Facebook boasts over 1.04 billion daily active users (Facebook, Company Info, 2016). According to Alexa.com (2016), Facebook is the second most visited website in the world following Google. While an increasing number of sport organizations have imbedded Facebook content into their marketing strategies, little empirical information is available on Facebook as a fan attraction mechanism (Pronschinske, Groza, & Walker, 2012).

Furthermore, even though these increasing advantages and the broad spread of social media, there are few researches that study their use in sport management, particularly from the fan perspective (Stavros, Meng, Westberg, & Farrelly, 2014).

## **1.2. Research Purpose and Research Question**

The purpose of this research was to provide an acumen into sport fan motivation by exploring fan interaction on the most popular professional Ecuadorian soccer teams on social media, during the off-season of the Ecuadorian Soccer Serie A. Specifically the research question is what motivates fans to engage with their Ecuadorian Soccer Teams on Facebook

Pages? Helped by the categorization of social media fan motivation of Stavros et al. (2014).

Why is it important to answer this question? First of all, because nowadays, social media is the most effective vehicle to communicate with fans, it gives to sport managers tools to create new relationship marketing strategies by understanding what motivates fans to engage with their teams and to supply the underpinning of meaningful interactions. Second, to help determining the generalizability of the first study on social media fan motivation by Stavros et al. (2014), and to identify possible additional categories. Finally, to emphasize the importance of maximizing the use of online channels for interaction in developing countries where consumers become to use more the internet and sports organizations needs to exercise relationship marketing strategies through it.

A qualitative approach was used to answer the research question using netnography (a method to study cultures and communities online) to explore the usage of Facebook Pages (comments and wall posts) by Ecuadorian soccer fans by selecting the three most popular Ecuadorian soccer teams. The time analyzed was the two weeks before the beginning of the Ecuadorian Soccer Serie A (January 22 to February 5) that is part of the

off-season league. In this period, teams have their traditionally team's big season kick-off event, and it is a crucial time to engage fans.

My motivation to conduct this research was based on the new opportunities for fans by the internet and technology. Social platforms give unprecedented opportunities to interact in real time within fans and their favorite teams, while teams and sports organizations are able to showcase their product like never before, as a result it is vital to explore the sports fans behavior on social media when we immerse and get excited for our colors, teams, sports events, etc. It was focused in Ecuadorian Soccer due to its local popular passion in an overview of the use of Facebook, the leading social media platform in Ecuador, according to the Ecuadorian National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INEC) in its Survey of Living Conditions (INEC, Documents, 2015), in order to provide a better understanding, for sport managers, sport researchers, and leisure researchers.

## **Chapter 2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Social Media Fan Motivation**

According to Andrews (2013), the term “sports fan” is defined as “someone who regularly follows sports and has developed a significant emotional attachment to and appreciation for teams or individuals who play sports” (p. 312, 313). With this clear definition as a starting point for “sports fan motivation” study, it is noted that a sports fan needs stimulus to have a regularly participation or to increase his significant emotional attachment to his teams or individual athletes. There are many psychological, sociological, and philosophical phenomenos that drive fandom, some of this past studies in fan motivation has surrounding its dimensions such as cognitive, emotional, and social explaining how they are able to use sports media to distract themselves and get excited about their favorites sport events and share these experiences with other fans (Raney & Bryant, 2006). More dipper, Wann (1995) explained the sport fan motivation in terms of needs associated with eustress, self-esteem, escape, entertainment, economic, aesthetic, group affiliation, and family needs.

Many researches have done fan motivation studies but in the field of social media, it was in 2014 by Stavros, Meng, Westberg, and Farrelly. They used netnography and content analysis approaches to identify

categories of sport fan motivation on Facebook, analyzing comments and posts by sport fans of many teams inside the National Basketball Association (NBA)<sup>6</sup> during the off-season of the league to understand what motives sport fans to interact on social media. They found four categories of fan motivation: passion, hope, esteem, and camaraderie.

Passion, belonged to the wall posts and comments that involves expressions of love, tribalism, encouragement, and praise. There were common words or phrases that illustrated their love of the team, such as “love”, “GO”, and “lets” were identify in the study. Statements of fans were emphasized about how teams are part central of their lives showing the desire of have the chances to manifest their sentiment for the team. As an example of tribalism, there are some comments and post that have capital letters (on social media capital letters are considered shouting) and exclamation marks to be more emphatic in their terms, so this statements make it clear the will of put in public their affection without forgetting that fans are using real names. The finding highline, according to Stavros et al. (2014), that “fans welcome an opportunity in this context to realize pleasure

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<sup>6</sup> It is the men's professional basketball league in North America, and it is considered the men's professional basketball league in the world

by expressing their connection to the team in a short, sharp burst of emotion.” (p. 462).

Hope, common known as the desire of something to happen, from the marketing perspective is a powerful motive that goes beyond any product, in this case sports (de Mello, MacInnis, & Stewart, 2007).

According to Stavros et al. (2014), the posts and comments related to hope were often involved in positive assessments, such as optimism, enthusiastic expectation, and performance of the players, team or management; even focusing to a particular athlete as the expectation for future success. Some examples from the Categorization and Examples of Social Media Fan Motivation Types by Stavros et al. (2014) are: “Good luck guys!!! Let’s beat L.A. THIS YEAR!!!”, and “Next year at this time we will be talking PLAYOFFS!!!” (p. 461). Finally, they added:

the expression of hope meets a fundamental participatory need in that it is often a by-product of one of the most powerful elements of the sport value exchange, namely the unpredictability of the result. Fans can take an optimistic view (especially out of season) because there is always a possibility that aspirations may come to fruition. In this regard, the use of social media is especially important because it provides a connection with kindred spirits that engender and amplify such sentiments with a supportive view and in so doing can raise the fan’s sense of self based on their contribution and positivity about the future of their team (Stavros et al., 2014, p. 463).

Esteem, it is centered on individual affections and needs to interact

in a community. The related posts and comments could be positive or

negative in a way that demonstrate specialist knowledge, authority, commitment, and status. In the negative form, the statements reflect explanations of bad team performance or management matters, or in the disappointment of no answers to their comments or appeals posted on the Facebook Page (Stavros et al., 2014). These types of statements are related to the next three issues:

First, the fan behavior shows a powerful viewpoint, petition, and also validation by fellow fans. Numerous comments of esteem express dissatisfaction to past performance of players. For example, the frustration obtained from players that not follows coaches' instructions. Also, when a player had the opportunity to succeeded and failed.

Second, comments and post that share experiences from events allowed fans to link the affection to the team. For instance, purchasing tickets or attend to special events.

Lastly, the interaction started when fans wanted to denote their skills and understanding of any related sport matter toward their team, these comments and post frequently stimulated discussion because they would like to have their opinion accepted, validated or even refuted, so these types of comments cause and effect in fellow fans. For instance, statements about how performance could be improved generated this discussion, as is showed

in the Categorization and Examples of Social Media Fan Motivation Types

by Stavros et al. (2014):

my own analysis of 2010-2011 nba season... Miami, 60+ wins  
lakers, 50-60+ wins... Miami will not get to the finals because  
of dwight howard, paul pierce, kevin garnett and ray allen.(or  
should I say its either boston or Orlando as the eastern  
conference champion). Amare stoudamire is better than bosh, so  
I think its better for Miami to trade bosh for stoudamire. If wade,  
james and amare are on the Miami, then we will do the talking.  
Of course lakers will win in the west, (no doubt about that) but  
lakers defeated boston and Orlando in the last two nba season.  
(p. 461).

It is considerate that social media is a clear vehicle to hear fans due  
to they know that are going to spread their ideas in a largely  
supportive audience.

Stavros et al. (2014) added:

Abstracting from our induction of fan motives, especially self-  
esteem, it is apparent that there are three critical elements of  
social media that enable fans to express themselves forcefully.  
These are opportunity, a captive audience, and (lack of)  
accountability, and each is discussed briefly. (p. 464).

Camaraderie, this interaction is related to a sense of group identity.

According to Stavros et al. (2014), the notion of camaraderie and belonging  
is showed “in the acknowledgement (“good point”), affirmation (“I fully  
agree”), and elaboration of opinion, or in efforts of people to allay fears  
about potential poor performance by taking a positive stance on what could  
eventuate.” (p. 464). Camaraderie, they wrote, is also guided by “notions of  
problem-solving, with numerous contributors asking for advice from other



fans about aspects of the teams operations.” (Stavros et al., 2014, p. 464).

This show that the fan community is viewed as a informed and trusted resource. For example, as is showed in the Categorization and Examples of Social Media Fan Motivation Types by Stavros et al. (2014) one fan wrote: “anybody know the ticket presale password?” (p. 461). Indeed, they finalized as “it is likely that the ability of social media to connect global audiences will enlarge the community and camaraderie opportunities as fans invested in a team exercise their need for belonging.” (Stavros et al., 2014, p. 465).

## **2.2. Interaction through Social Media**

Marketing is no longer simply about developing, selling, and delivering products. It is progressively more concerned with the development and maintenance of mutually satisfying long-term relationships with customers. The 1950s is known as the era of mass-marketing, the 1960s as market segmentation, and the 1990s as the genesis of personalized marketing, in which knowledge about individual customers is used to guide highly focused marketing strategies due to the change of several conditions, such as more intense, often global, competition, more fragmentation of markets, a generally high level of product quality (this forces to seek competitive advantage in other ways), more demanding

customers, and rapidly changing customer buying patterns. This new form of marketing is called relationship marketing, and there are other terms used, either as substitutes or to describe some close parallel –micromarketing, database marketing, one-to-one marketing, loyalty marketing, wrap-around marketing, customer partnering, symbiotic marketing, and interactive marketing (Buttle, 1996).

The definition of relationship marketing has been examined from sectorial perspectives. According to the first to publish work on relationship marketing, Berry (1983), took it from a service sector perspective as: “relationship marketing is attracting, maintaining, and –in multi-service organizations-enhancing customer relationships.” (p. 25). Then two years later from an industrial marketing perspective, Jackson (1985) defined relationship marketing as: “Marketing concentrated towards strong, lasting relationships with individual accounts.” (p. 120). From a network perspective Grönroos (1995): “To identify and establish, maintain and enhance relationships with customers and other stakeholders at a profit, so that the objectives of partners’ interests are met; and is achieved by mutual exchange and fulfilment of promises.”

Others have attempted to characterize relationship marketing more broadly, but Morgan and Hunt (1994) offer the broadest definition of it,

taking neither a sectorial perspective nor specifying the need for there to be a customer. Rather, “relationship marketing refers to all marketing activities directed toward establishing, developing, and maintaining successful relational exchanges.” (p. 22). In the opinion of Palmatier (2008), relationship marketing is defined with the integration of three aspects: the first aspect is related with “engagement activities across stages of the relationship stages of the relationship lifecycle and thereby implicitly recognizes that relationships are dynamic processes that developed over time through typical stages...” (p. 1); the second deals with “the target or scope of relationship marketing activities; whereas some definitions are restricted to customer relationships, others include relationships with any constituent (e.g., internal departments, competitors, customers, suppliers).” (p. 2); and the third aspect related with “the locus of benefits derived from relationship marketing activities.” (p. 2). As a result of the three aspects integration, “the process of identifying, developing, maintaining, and terminating relational exchanges with the purpose of enhancing performance.” (p. 3). Indeed, all these definitions of relationship marketing share common concepts, such as attracting, maintain and enhancing mutually beneficial relationships characterized by interactions (Harwood, Broderick, & Garry, 2008).

What has come from these definitions is a debate about the focus of relationship marketing. Morgan and Hunt (1994) identify ten discrete forms of relationship marketing (see Table 1.). Gummesso (1994) goes further listing 32 relationships in defining relationship marketing as “marketing seen as relationships, networks and interaction” (p. 12).

Table 1. The Relational Exchanges in Relationship Marketing

Supplier partnerships	Lateral partnerships	Internal partnerships	Buyer partnerships
Good suppliers Services suppliers	Competitors Non-profit organizations Government	Business units Employees Functional departments	Intermediate customers Ultimate customers

The heart of most relationship marketing practice is the three relationships: company/intermediary, company/consumer, and company/employee. Although the dominant focus is on external customer relationships (Buttle, 1996).

Companies, particularly in the service sector, are increasingly finding ways to building close long-term relationships with its consumers. They know that winning new consumers is significantly costlier than retaining existing consumers. Indeed, what companies do are consumer retention and not only helps increase customer longevity but also increases customer wallet share, pointing to loyalty and profitability (Ehrlich &

Fanelli, 2012). As Milne and McDonald (1999) “marketers who want to be successful in the future must constantly be listening to their customers, gathering information on the types of products they want and services they desire.”(p. 143).

According to Ehrlich and Fanelli (2012), the advantages of retaining current customers go beyond just having one more customer, or in other words, the more the customer’s tenure, the more profitable the customer. It increases substantially in the second year and thereafter, as purchases rise and expenses associated with servicing new customers decline. Current customers are the best potential new customers, cross-selling and up-selling are the most cost-effective ways of generating new business, such as when a happy customer who already does business with you is far more likely to buy more products and services in the future. Existing customers bring referrals, for many companies, most new business may come from referrals by current clients. The loyalty cycle is important, the more customers do business with you, the more likely they are to remain customers, the more profitable they are likely to be. Lifetime value of customers increases with each product they purchase and each year they remain customers (see figure 1.). As sport is not a one-time buy for spectators, but can be viewed as a continual service, relationship marketing is exceptionally relevant for sport

marketers. The core services that sport marketers sell are fandom, an intangible asset, and the game day experience, a limited and perishable product. Berry (2002) considers the ideal core service to be the service that actually “attracts new customers through its need-meeting character, cements the business through its quality, multiple parts, and long-term nature, and provides a base for the selling of additional services over time” (p. 63). (Andrews & Carrington, 2013)

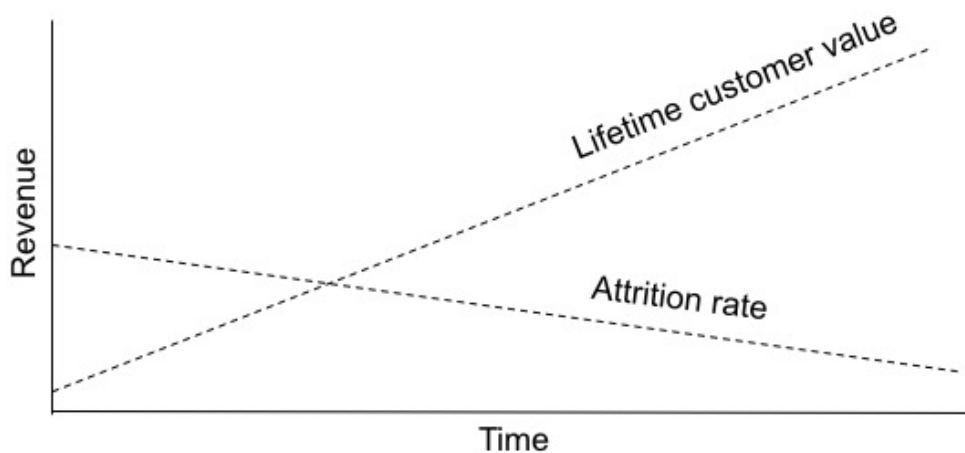


Figure 1. Lifetime Customer Value: The Longer Customers Remain, the Greater Their Value by Ehrlich, E., & Fanelli, D. (2012)

According to Tapscott (2009), in his seven rules to guide a marketing plan, marketing professionals should: do not focus on customers rather than engage them turning them into prosumers of goods and services, create customer experiences using the Web to help deliver the new value,

and make the brand becomes a relationship. (p. 217). The more highly committed the fan is to the team, the stronger the emotional bond. In short, relationship marketing understand success involves attracting and maintaining customers over an extended period of time and the cost of maintain relationships is smaller than the cost of attracting new fans.

Lastly, Grönroos (2011) defined interaction as “mutual or reciprocal action where two or more parties have an effect upon one another.” (p. 244).

He concludes that:

The opportunities for supplier to engage themselves with their customers’ value creation offer unique opportunities for suppliers to extend their marketing (and sales) activities into the customers’ sphere by incorporating activities during firm-customer interactions in the marketing process. (p. 245).

Sport is the marketing product, which is the core of the marketing mix, so decisions can be made about how to distribute it, promote it, and price it. However, sport is a kind of product that could exits at one given point of time, so as the core construct has to be replaced with a long-term construct that fits the nature of the relationship marketing (Grönroos, 2004).

Traditional media is one-way communication and the feedback of consumers sometimes is delayed, has more immediate value on the revenue, and gives limited avenue; on the other hand, new media is inherently interactive, complement and supplement traditional media. Rafaeli (1998) noted that interactivity empowers users and increases the consumer’s level

of control. For Billings & Hardin (2014) “new media allow users to become participants, not just consumers of mediated content.” (p. 21). Social media environment allows sports fans to convey, disseminate their support for teams and athletes not possible with traditional media. As an example, share anger in a not score penalty, cheer for a hack-trick goals of their favorite football player or berate a coach for a poor play-strategy. Fans even exchange information and interact with fellow fans. They interact and express themselves in the privacy of their dorm rooms, apartments and homes or in the company of other revelers at sport bars. They become active agents by joining fan group or like fan pages on Facebook (Billings, 2014). The interaction is not just between fans, it is as well with athletes, teams, sportswriters, announcers, and reporters due to the expanded use of newer media to interact and inform their social networks. This has caused a parasocial interaction as well, one-sided relationship where one member knows a great deal about the other, but the other does not; such as sport celebrities and fans. Many of the sports celebrities have their own twitter feeds and often respond to fan updates, providing and experience of pseudo-engagement with the player (Billings, 2014).

The new era of the internet and technologies makes easier and more efficient the process of interaction (Yadav & Varadarajan, 2005) that is why



many organizations work hard to maintain contact with their customers and provide additional products and services to them over time (Tuten & Solomon, 2015). For instance, Macy's Inc. is one of the USA's premier omnichannel retailer, with fiscal 2015 sales of \$27.1 billion, which has customer focus where local merchandising teams listen to and respond to customer needs (Macy's inc, About Us, 2016). Macy's solicits and closely monitors customers' ratings and comments, consequently these engagements represent commitment to provide reward experiences for customers regardless of where they choose to shop Macy's. Every product is given a one to five red star (Macy's logo) rating based on customer votes, customers are encouraged to write reviews (Macy's inc, Rules & Regulations, 2016). Ratings and reviews, both positive and negative, are prominently displayed, and shoppers also can send their reviews to their friends through a variety of social networks such as Facebook, Myspace, Twitter, and Digg. Some products sold on Macys.com have hundreds of reviews. Macy's launched its Facebook site in 2009, and by the beginning of 2010 it had approximately 250,000 fans; since then its fan base has grown to almost 14,145,996 (Macy's inc, Facebook Page, 2016). Macy's posts are typically a mixture of fashion trend information, community service program notifications, and queries to customers about their choices

in fashion. Most post receive hundreds of positive affirmations from the “Like” button and dozens of customer comments. Through the use of social-media analytic tools, companies can now sift through volumes of unstructured data to listen to ongoing conversations, identify trends, quantify results, and determine appropriate actions (Brennan & Schafer, 2010). Indeed, new technologies provide to sports fans features to express themselves and shape the conversation or at least to observe what others have to say.

The growth of social media has been astounding, the popular platforms as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and other social sites continuing to increment new users at triple-digit rates. Even new applications and new uses continue to emerge. Two examples are Periscope and Snapchat. Periscope and Snapchat are social media platforms where people can post their videos in live time and share to the world, there slogans are “Explore the world through someone else’s eyes.” (Periscope, 2016), and “Introducing Memories” (Snapchat, 2016).

The National Broadcasting Company (NBC), an American commercial broadcast television network, is one of the media rights holder of Rio 2016 Summer Olympics and has made a deal with Snapchat to show

highlights. It is the first time the American network has agree to share video of the sporting contest (NBC Olympics, 2016).

Also, hardware has accomplished with the uses of these new applications, making it faster and easier for users to view information anytime, anywhere using devices with the fastest internet worldwide such as GPS-based smart phones or tablets. This speed of change and development in social media and its transformation on the Net have and will continue to revolutionize marketing (Brennan & Schafer, 2010). As the same way as e-commerce revolutionized consumer retail sales, social media and digital influencers have transformed how public relations professionals do their job. (Agresta & Bough, 2011). Social media is just not other communication channel due to how easier is to create content, for example, Smith (2013) says that social media can best be described as “a conversation that takes place online through a set of tools that can include text, audio, video, and pictures.” (p. 173) and Agresta et al. (2010) defines “Social media is verb. It’s the act of creating and posting content in any and all of the following hosted environments: online, mobile, virtual, or as yet to be named.”(p. 2), but this has changed in recent years and has gone from being a social conversation to being about business. Companies are using social media to engage prospects and consumers to improve the awareness of brand, cause,

or mission or to simply sell more products, if they do not use social media platforms, marketing campaigns, and sites to service their customers it is probable that they will be out of business in few years or at least be at a significant disadvantage in relation to their competitors (Smith, 2013).

The power of social media helps to brand equity, customer loyalty, and business performance. Various studies have found that: 74% of consumers have a more impression after interacting with a company through social media; purchase likelihood increases 51% after a customer clicks the “like” button; 90% of consumers trust product reviews from people they know, 70% people trust reviews from people they do not know; 40% of social media users “like” businesses in order to receive special discounts and promotions; Facebook fans of a brand spend twice as much as those who are not Facebook fans (Funk, 2013).

Funk (2013) located a few of the ways social media is part of the conversation in the all stages of the consumer relationship life cycle:

Awareness, knowledge, consideration, selection: before purchases are made, conversations about what brands to buy take place online, and the proliferation of customer ratings and reviews influences buyers, along with the sharing of purchases and recommendations. Companies profit through increased online visibility in search, video, mobile, and the blogosphere. More and more companies are profiting from free sampling campaigns, coupons, and sweepstakes. Increasingly, social media are driving customer awareness, influencing customer research and

willingness to try new products, and inspiring purchase decisions and recommendations.

Satisfaction, advocacy, loyalty: after purchases are made, social networks are the new CRM channel, a place to publicly resolve complaints, receive testimonials, and deepen consumer engagement. Brands build equity with their social fan bases and encourage loyalty through member-exclusive discounts, building of personal relationships, corporate social responsibility, cause-related marketing, and more. (p. 3).

The nature of social media as a Web 2.0 technology is “create and collaborate” transforming the fan from passive to an active contributor to the “sports/media productions complex” (Wenner, 2002, p. 9). Sport organizations are using social media to increase online footprint, creating accounts around the social network sites and utilizing its features, and several sport organizations are using social media to get fans more actively engaged with the sports and with each other (Billings, 2014). It is beyond the traditional communication channels but besides this fans created a new experience called transmedia sport, which is when fans combine television viewing, social media use, and website access. Transmedia sport provides new options for users to interact with each other about any related sport matter at anytime. In conclusion, the future of media sport is the relationship between screens (Hutchins & Rowe, 2012).

Studies analyzing the employment of social networking services in sport continues to come out. One of the examples from twitter perspective was how athletes used twitter accounts to interact with fans. Hambrick,

Simmons, Greenhalgh, and Greenwell (2010) identified categories of communication by doing content analysis. Their findings displayed an elevated quantity of direct interaction between athletes and fans, which it is not a characteristic of traditional media communications. Then from the Facebook perspective, Wallace, Wilson, and Miloch (2011) explored the Facebook pages of various collegiate sport organizations to recognize the communication tools employed, also how Facebook was conducted to improve brand recognition and perception as well as how users interacted on it. Their conclusions showed that teams used Facebook Pages for brand-related targets and to supply the last team news or information to fans but specially they highlighted the importance of this communication vehicle to stimulate engagement.

Filo, Lock, and Karg (2015) did a research review in sport and social media inside the field of sport management using the service-dominant logic perspective with emphasis on relationship marketing to analyze 70 journal articles in english language about new media technologies facilitating interactivity and co-creation that allow for the development and sharing of user-generated content among and between brands and individuals. They identified three categories of social media research. The first category was the strategic, which they defined as “highlighted how social media tools

provide a mechanism for brands to communicate with users, develop relationships and promote brand activities.”(p. 175). The second was the operational category, which “revealed the different types of content shared and posted by brands, including: interaction with fans/followers, behind the scenes access, news and information, promotion, along with the emphasis on personalisation employed by brands via social media.” (p.175). The last category was the user-focused, which “illustrated that social media users are young and educated, with heavier use found among males compared to females. A collection of motives including interactivity, information gathering, entertainment, fandom and camaraderie influence social media use. Furthermore, gender and other demographic variables explain variation in these motives.”(p. 175). To sum up, they found that social media research in sport management aligns with service-dominant logic and illustrates the role of social media in cultivating relationships among and between brands and individuals where interaction and engagement are fundamental to cultivate these relationship (pp. 166-181).

## **Chapter 3. Methodology**

### **3.1. Research Design**

To develop this study a qualitative approach was conducted utilizing netnography to explore the use of the most employed social networking service in Ecuador, with the help of Ecuadorian soccer fans of the three most popular Ecuadorian professional soccer teams.

In line with Kozinets (2015):

Netnography is the name given to a specific set of related data collection, analysis, ethical and representational research practices, where a significant amount of the data collected and participant-observational research conducted originates in and manifests through the data shared freely on the Internet, including mobile applications. (p.79).

Netnography was chosen due to the purpose of the study about obtaining motives of human experiences from online social interaction and/or content.

The period analyzed was the last two weeks of the Ecuadorian Soccer Serie A's off-season (January 22 to February 5) due to friendly matches in preparation for the new season and special events that have each team, in which they present new players, coaches, managers, new football uniforms, sponsors, etc. for the 2016 season and also in this special event, they play a friendly match against a well-known soccer club from Latin America region. This period is crucial to be in touch with fans, where the



opportunities for engagement are better due to the promotions for the new season.

Facebook, according to the Living Conditions Survey by the National Insitute of Statistics and Censuses of Ecuador (2014), is the most used social networking service in Ecuador with around 98% of people who are over the age of twelve years old. (see Figure 2.) In addition of its popularity and use, Facebook was choosen because of the interaction that provides for its users, which could be noted in the company's mission:

Founded in 2004, Facebook's mission is to give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected. People use Facebook to stay connected with friends and family, to discover what's going on in the world, and to share and express what matters to them. (Facebook, Company Info, 2016).

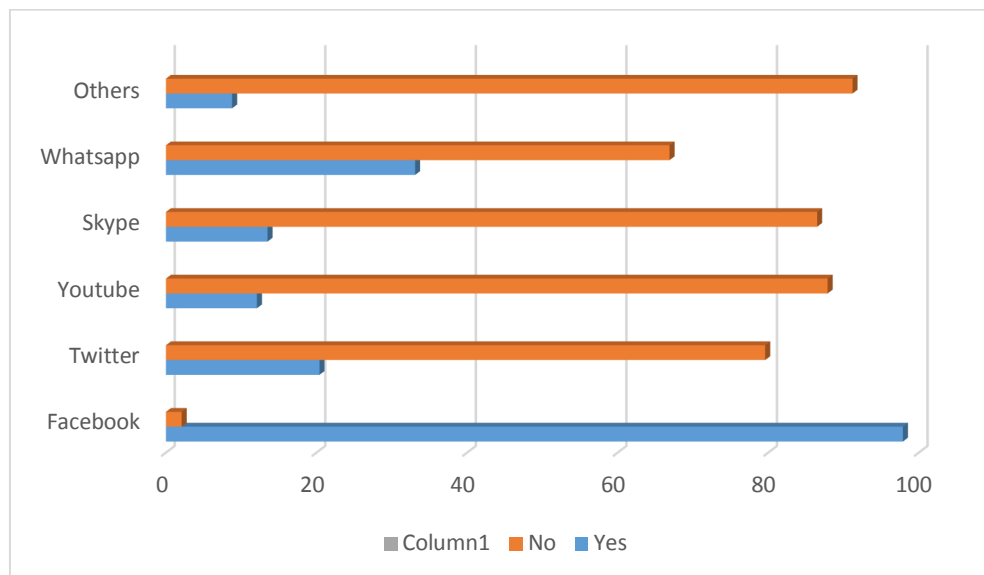


Figure 2. Most Used Social Media Platforms in Ecuador, according to INEC  
(2014)

The Ecuadorian Soccer Serie A was chosen as the focal point for this study as it is the country's premier soccer competition. The organizing sport body is the Ecuadorian Soccer Federation, the national governing body of soccer in Ecuador. Soccer is the most popular, and it is one of the professional sports in Ecuador where commercialization has adopted its figure giving to marketing and social media new practices in the sports arena. Due to the popularity among other sports, soccer has more "followers" on Facebook. This is more than 129,064 people, according to its Facebook Page (Ecuadorian Football Federation, 2016), than any other professional or non-professional sport league in Ecuador.

Founded in 1971, the Ecuadorian Soccer Serie A has changed its tournament format many times and the current format has twelve teams in which they are involve into three stages. The first and second stages follow the double round-robin format, and the third stage is a match between the winners from the first and second stages. For the purpose of this study, it has been taken the three Ecuadorian soccer teams that has more fans according to a study of Football Fans and Preferences by Brandim (2010) and based on an exploratory stage of stopping by the official Ecuadorian

Soccer Federation website<sup>7</sup> and following the links of the twelve teams in the Serie A League to determine their official website for later follow the official Facebook Fan Pages, to match with Brandim (2010) study, the result showed that the most liked three teams are Barcelona Sporting Club from Guayaquil, Liga Deportiva Universitaria de Quito from Quito, and Club Sport Emelec from Guayaquil (see Table 2.), the same three teams founded by Bradim (2010) (see Figure 3.). The teams were selected in a way that would give more data of interacting fans due to its popularity. However, comments and post from other fans were taken into account because of their interaction on the three most popular official Facebook Fan Pages.

Table 2. Most Liked Ecuadorian Soccer Clubs Serie a Facebook Fan Pages

Club	Total Page Likes	Username
Barcelona Sporting Club	3,441,010	@barcelonascweb
Liga Deportiva Universitaria de Quito	483,130	@LigadeQuitoOficial
Club Sport Emelec	272,914	@C.S.Emelec
Club Independiente del Valle	117,537	@independientedelvalle
Delfin Sporting Club	43,503	@DelfinSC
Sociedad Deportiva Aucas	33,884	@aucas45
Club Deportivo Cuenca	27,738	@clubdeportivocuencaoficial
Fuerza Amarilla Sporting Club	24,873	@FuerzaAmarillaSC
Club Deportivo Universidad Católica Ecuador	7,241	@UCatolicaEC
Club Deportivo El Nacional	6,625	@Club-Deportivo-El-Nacional-108445649213755
Club Deportivo River Play Ecuador	4,380	@Club-Deportivo-River-Ecuador-1542221122684686

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<sup>7</sup> [www.ecuafutbol.org](http://www.ecuafutbol.org)

Mushuc Runa Sporting Club	66	@Mushuc-Runa-Sporting-Club
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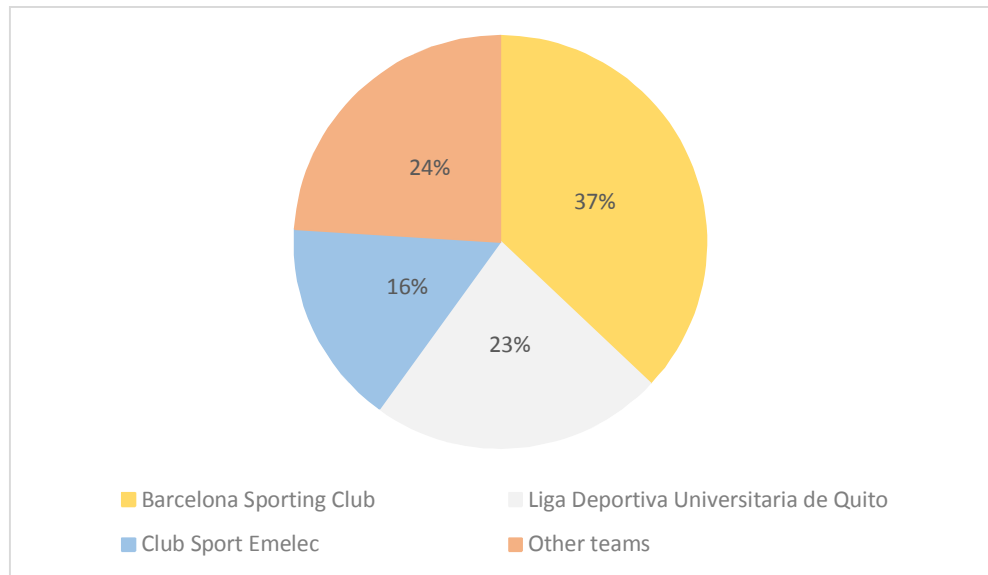


Figure 3. Most Popular Ecuadorian Football Teams, according to Brandim (2010)

### 3.2. Data Collection

Ethics matter in social sciences research, and as Kozinets (2015) mentioned that “Netnographers face a lot of ethical choices and probably load up a certain personal and legal responsibility even as they go online and then write up their research and publish it.” (p.128), so to follow a good ethics practice the researcher used his Facebook account to log in on Facebook to aid to collect the data, even it was not need it because of the nature of Facebook Pages that is established on its Facebook Page Terms

(2016) as “I. General, C. Content posted to a Page is public and viewable by everyone who can see the Page.”. Second, there was no use of profiles information from sport fans or sport organizations. Sport fans wall posts and comments were anonymous, and the analysis and interpretation in this paper is unlikely to cause any harm.

Due to the nature of the method as claimed by Kozinets (2015) “the data collection strategy of netnography, like ethnography, always centres upon the researcher.”(p. 67).

First, the researcher visited the official Ecuadorian Soccer Federation website ([www.ecuafutbol.org](http://www.ecuafutbol.org)) for taking the official links of the three most popular Ecuadorian soccer clubs. Then on each official soccer club website, looked for their official Facebook Fan Page. Finally, using a web browser extension, NCapture<sup>8</sup>, the wall posts and comments were collected from the official Facebook Fan Page. The total data collected was 27,259 posts and comments.

### **3.3. Data Analysis**

For the analysis of the data collected, the researcher imported the files from NCapture to NVivo for mac<sup>9</sup> as a dataset<sup>10</sup> source. The computer

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<sup>8</sup> It is a tool to quickly and easily capture content on social media for analysis.

<sup>9</sup> It is an application for qualitative data analysis.

software NVivo for mac was used to storage, to organize, and to look more closely at the data to create nodes<sup>11</sup> and word clouds. The first step was to analyze the online social interaction with a deep reading phase, in which the unit of examination was the online content of the Facebook Pages and the coding units were the individual wall posts and comments by fans. During the reading phase, the coding units were analyzed using the Seven Interpenetrating Intellectual Implements by Kozinets (2015) to decode cultural meanings to think about motives categories of interaction by fans and were sorted by nodes on NVivo for mac. The last stage was a hermeneutic interpretation of the analysis by doing a holistically and holonically reading. Also, the computer software helped to generate word clouds for a better understanding of which words are often used by fans inside every type of motive. To avoid any potential limitation in the analysis of qualitative research, Van Nes, Abma, Jonsson, and Deeg (2010) suggest to stay as long and as much as possible in the original language, so the researcher kept Spanish language until the end of the study and just the listed wall posts and comments were translated to English.

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<sup>10</sup> A collection of related sets of information.

<sup>11</sup> Collection of references about a specific theme.

## **Chapter 4. Results**

What better place to be an absolute fan where you are allowed to express yourself as most as you can than Social Media? The results of the study showed how fans are using Facebook to get closer to their teams, games, fellow fans, and so on. Fans have taken to the social media ‘airwaves’ to voice their opinions about any number of sports-related topics. For the purpose of this study, the findings can be described as a number of topics coming from the internet users’ sentiments as they use Facebook Fan Pages to interact with their team and the community. One of the past research indicates four categories of motivation on Facebook Pages, which are: passion, hope, esteem, and camaraderie (Stavros et al., 2014). The researcher identified one additional motive (gratitude) that revealed a concordance with a previous research into fan communities, in which says that fan motivation comes from the needs, affections, and ideas from them (McAlexander, Schouten, & Koenigm, 2002).

The interaction was noted by teams to fans, fans to teams, and among fellow fans. It is important to mention that the teams posts were an important source to increase the engagement due to the easy way to keep updated their followers around the world with all the team activities. The

period of study allowed to include player signings, product launches, ticket sales, new players contracts, players' happy birthdays, player's prizes, etc.

One of the three teams analyzed (Liga Universitaria de Quito), does not allow on their Facebook Fan Page wall posts from their fans or any individual, it just permits comments on the team's wall posts. There is not evidence in the study why the team applies this privacy policy to their Facebook Fan Page, but it is noted the lowest level of interaction among the other two teams due to this limitation. Also, the three teams rarely responded directly to individual fans. Without more opening, these five types of social media fan motivation are detailed below.

#### **4.1. Types of Social Media Fan Motivation**

##### **4.1.1. Passion**

The definition of passion by the dualistic model of passion (DMP) in the Encyclopedia of Sport and Exercise Psychology by Tenenbaum & Eklund (2014) is "a strong inclination toward a self-defining activity (person or object) that one likes (or even loves), finds important, and in which one invests time and energy." (pp. 518-519). This definition helped to understand of the passion of people involved in sport, in this case fans, as well as the outcomes they experience.



Fans expressed their like or love of the team by wall posts or comments stated by a strong inclination such as “I love the club, up BACA!!!”, “My passion... my feelings... my soul... my blood color... just you Barcelona my idol”, “Forever EMeLEcSisTA”, “I am 100% emelecista till my dead”, “My liga I couldn’t watch you but my heart was beating for you”, “Liga I love you!!”, (see Appendix 1.). As it is noted, many of these sentiments are expressed in some detail and others not. Also, the use of exclamation marks, capital letters, and emoji<sup>12</sup> were common to encourage their phrase or ideas, such examples as Stavros, Meng, Westberg, & Farrelly (2014) mentioned are indicators of tribalism due to in social media are considered to be shouting. It is clear that fans wanted to make public their declarations of affections.

As it is noted in the passion word cloud by Nvivo software (see Figure 4.), the most used words to connect their phrases or ideas to express their passion are “great”, “champion”, “forever”, “passion”, “heart”, “like”, “eternity”, “love”, etc. This illustrated their love of the team with a strong inclination. Passion was the number three most used category by fans but most of the posts and comments were short statements. For instance, “I love

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<sup>12</sup> a small digital image or icon used to express an idea, emotion, etc., in electronic communication.

you emelec”, “GO FOR IT EMELEC”, “This is my BARCE”, “I IOvE YoU  
 BarcelonA.. <3”, “Full liguista”, “Be strong liga You are the best”.



Figure 4. Passion Word Cloud

#### 4.1.2. Hope

Hope is conceptualized as an expectation of positive outcomes for future events. The wishes and desires of fans are highly identified in sports (Leeming, Madden, & Marlan, 2010). As it is noted in the word cloud by Nvivo software (see Figure 5.), the most common used words in hope phrases by fans were “year”, “afternoon”, “victory”, “championship”, “bless”, “win”, “hope”, “luck”, “achieve”, etc. These words are related with future time and positive outcomes. The data showed a strong optimism and enthusiastic expectation toward the team season or management, such as “LET’S GO BARCELONA WE HAVE TO BE CHAMPIONS THIS YEAR”, “LET’S GO CEVALLOS AND ALFARO FOR THE HIRING OF DINHO AND KAKA”, “Go forward my bombillo you will be champion until 2020”, “It’s coming a great year for the king of cups #whiteafternoon” (see Appendix 2.) It was not surprising the strong optimism and enthusiastic expectation in these teams. First of all, Club Sport Emelec was the 2013, 2014, and 2015 champion in the Serie A, and fans would like to achieve the four-consecutive championship; they even wrote words as “tetrachampionship” with the union of “tetra” and “championship”. Tetra comes from the Ancient Greek, which means number four. Second, Barcelona Sporting Club was the 2012 champion in the Serie A with the

most Ecuadorian championship in a total of 14 since 1960. Barcelona S.C. also made fans wished to stay playing for the season one of the top player in the history of soccer, the Brazilian soccer player Ronaldinho Gaucho who played in worldwide popular soccer teams, such as A.C. Milan from Italy (Associazione Calcio Milan) and F.C. Barcelona from Spain (Futbol Club Barcelona.) Posts like “keep playing in Barcelona”, “Now this year we are going to be champions with RONALDINH”, “COME BACK TO ECUADOR! Ronaldinho Gaucho !! COME BACK” were common (see Appendix 2.). Finally, Liga Universitaria de Quito was the 2010 champion in the Serie A and the only club with three international championships won. Posts related to their international achievement were noted such as “This is the attitude this year we are going to be champions again in the libertadores”. Wall posts and comments of desire and wishes were related to supporting players, as well. For example, the prize of best goalkeeper of the season 2015 was won by their goalkeeper. Fans posted “You are great Dominguez keep like this because this year is ours”. To their coach “Be strong Borghi the league is going to start, for now it’s not logic to judge. Let’s go Liga, this year we are going to be champions” (see Appendix 2.). Hope was the number fourth motivation category most used by fans.



#### 4.1.3. Self-Esteem

Past researchers showed how the features of Facebook can project individual selves among their network (often the friend's network is larger than in real life), and suggested that may reasonably impact an individual's self-esteem (Suler, 2004). For example, posting on team Facebook Fan Pages (where are millions of followers) their ideas and opinions, such as team management or team performance will allow to interact their self-esteem where they are demonstrating specialist knowledge, authority, commitment, and status.

The study showed how fans are interacting with their teams through wall posts and comments that contained statements related to bad or good team performance and team management, experiences obtained from had basked the glory of their team, and competence and expertise of the sport and team, which matches with the past research on Sport Fan Motivation on Social Media by Stavros, Meng, Westberg, & Farrelly (2014). Also, it showed that the self-esteem interactions were the most used among other categories founded. Finally, because of the period analyzed, interactions of self-esteem by fans were more related to the topics of uniforms, players, coaches, and preparation games for the new season.

Examples of the first interaction noted were statements related to bad or good team performance and team management, such as “Blanco long time ago is 1 less on the field he’s very slow for the intelligence of diaz”, “they don’t have good game... I am barcelonista but I don’t have trust in this coach... I’m sorry but don’t be passionate and be realistic... but perhaps I am wrong about what I’ve said...”, “why you don’t hire Alves he is out from Liga, he is a good player who knows how to score goals for the first game...”, “we have an excellent squad to continue playing the league and be the best in the libertadores”, “Esteban hopefully you don’t be wrong in your decisions and hire a better player as alvez”, and “bad to mix the team with politics” (see Appendix 3.). Often, fans received validation, likes or dislikes by other fans. It is notable that posts with these opinions are more prone to receive good or bad feedbacks by the community because are targeted to past performance, frustration with players, coaches, managers, policies, and so on because it is supposed to be a preparation period for the new season. In addition, teams passed for some difficulties, such as C.S. Emelec had to change at last moment (days before) its playing field due to reasons not showed in the data but fans were interacting with posts and comments like “what a shame we all wanted to watch our team playing in milagro we count on that. Besides fans are fans and we follow you wherever

you go” (see Appendix 3.). Also, the uniforms for the new season were an important topic for fans from Barcelona S.C. and C.S. Emelec. In the 2015 season for Barcelona S.C., the T-shirt had many sponsors on it and was disliked by fans, this was considered by the 2016 season and fans were supporting with statements as “That t-shirt looks great, without many sponsors” (see Appendix 3.). S.C. Emelec signed a deal with Adidas to provide new training and playing kit for the next seasons, “it’s so good this t-shirt, simple without many sponsors with the elegant touch that characterizes the Adidas brand! Let’s go Emelec!” (see Appendix 3.).

Examples of the second interactions noted were experiences obtained from had basked the glory of their team, such as “It was a great show the night before the stadium was full as never before in history”, “To whom it concerns if you win 1.6M in tickets, 100M in a dinner and 320M in t-shirts sell? Barcelona lives sunk in a financial crisis created by the worst board of directors that never knew how to exploit the brand for the team benefit. WITHOUT DOUBT IT HAS BEEN GOOD THE ARRIVED OF DIHNO”, “What a goal”, “Great Dida... to my opinion it’s time to be a goalkeeper from an international team...”, and “I like how the team was started, the players look motivated, wonderful WHITE AFTERNOON!!! They have to take in mind open the general exit for the leaving of the fans,



in this way will be fast and comfortable, thanks to whom may it concern.”

(see Appendix 3.). This interaction was an effect by the experience of attending special nights or afternoon of each team. For instance, Barcelona S.C. for its special event called “Yellow Night” signed a deal with the famous soccer player Ronaldinho Gaúcho from Brazil, fans experienced a night as never before “Amazing my Barça it works as a watch with Dinho it will be better if he come back to see the colossus of America returns” (see Appendix 3.). C.S. Emelec played two games against a Peruvian team, Club Alianza Lima, the first game was at home in its special event before the season called “Blue Explosion” and the second away at Lima, Peru. This allowed interactions from Club Alianza Lima fans in the C.S. Emelec Facebook Fan Page as “WE SEE YOU AT LIMA – YOU ARE INVITED TO THE BLANQUIAZUL PARTY!! IT’S GONNA BE SPECTACULAR LET’S GO ALIANZA LIMA <3” (see Appendix 3.).

Finally, statements related to expertise and knowledge of sports and team examples are “I give him 10 games (5 at home and 5 away). He has minimum to win 20 points, if not, we will start the campaign #GetoutAlmada”, “I said like this Banguera Velasco Marquez Aimar Pineida Minda Castillo Diaz Penilla Lino Blanco”, “it’s good the management of the board of directors, like this we’re going to be a prestige

institution and for that assholes that just criticizes, this is called MARKETING... it's an exhibition for the YELLOW night... assholes...”, “WE NEED A 9... A GOAL SCORER... WE HAVE A GOOD SQUAD BUT IT IS VISIBLE THAT WE NEED SOMEONE THAT HAS GOOD SHOOT IN FRONT OF THE GOAL... HOPEFULLY ABOUT STRAKA DOESN'T BE OTHER SPECULATION AND THEY BRING HIM BACK... EMELEC HAS THE RESOURCES TO PAY AN EXCELLENT PLAYER... INVEST AND SEE HOW YOU WILL BE AT THE FINALS... HEY DON NEME... COVER THE WHOLE TEAM AREAS BECAUSE EMELEC IS OBLIGATED TO BRING THE LIBERTADORES CUP THIS YEAR...” (see Appendix 3.). Fans took the opportunity to share their expertise or suggestion about which players have to be on the field, which strategy should employ the coaches, why managers should hire a specific player, etc. social media allows this type of interaction because it is a place where fans have the opportunity to express themselves in a captive audience with lack of accountability.

The word cloud of self-esteem category by Nvivo software (see Figure 6.), denotes how fans are connecting their opinions and ideas with positive or negatives words, such as “good”, “bad”, “excellent”, “great”, “better”, and “ideal”. Also, with words that were subjects to opinions as

“team”, “player”, “design”, “Adidas”, “game”, “shirt”, “dinho”, “squad”, “coach”, and “defenders”. Finally, with words that connect to expressions of suggestions or expertise as “need”, “besides”, “hire”, and “opinion”.



Figure 6. Self-Esteem Word Cloud

#### 4.1.4. Camaraderie

Social media foster relationship and connections with other people. Sports, like social media, creates arenas where different cultures can be brought together. Also, sports and social media take place in a co-constructed space in which the rules of normal life are in some ways suspended. The study showed how fans exercise the interaction of camaraderie, in which provides a sense of identity and belonging. Past studies have showed how consumers increasingly use social media to gather knowledge about their followed brands (Baird & Parasnis, 2011).

Fans not only wrote statements related to sports matters, they particularly used these fan pages to shift from soccer topics to other matters. For example, one of the fans posted “I ordered a whisky with coca cola... I know it doesn’t make sense I did it to get your attention :v xD”, other fan shared “New \*O\* Romantic Rap <3 Listen & Share \*-\* <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=Yh9ntY5v-MA>”, “beauty could you add me to your friend contacts”, “hey learn to write that embarrass us” (see Appendix 4.), this shows how sport is especially conducive to broader social engagement.

The most noted interaction among fans were problem-solving posts and comments where fan camaraderie was present through numerous of fans

asking for team activities, operations, player's matters, promotions, and so on. For example, "In which stadium are going to play?", "Can you help me when is going to play Barcelona", "How could I be associate I am from Guayaquil", "where can I buy the green t-shirt?", "How many is the stadium capacity?", "somebody knows if this week on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> there is training for liga formatives please", "I live in USA how can I obtain a t-shirt" (see Appendix 4.). Fellow fans usually responded these questions, such as "36,000 spectators", "tickets available from today", "how are you doing my friend I ask the same price I payed 7 each one", "ALVEZ IS A BSC PLAYER PEOPLE!!!", "Friday February 5<sup>th</sup> emelec vs catolica pm 19.30" (see Appendix 4.). As noted in the word cloud camaraderie by Nvivo software (see Figure 7.) words that connect these interactions were "somebody", "tickets", "players", "selling", "going", "time", "please", "information", "share", "buy", "knows", and so on. Words that are used to relate problem-solving statements.

Finally, the study showed that camaraderie was the second most interactive motive among all. This is in harmony with Nair (2011) who consider social media as "online tools where content, opinions, perspectives, insights, and media can be shared... (and) at its core social media is about relationships and connections between people and organizations" (p. 45).



#### 4.1.5. Gratitude

The data analyzed showed a fifth type motive on social media fan motivation where fans were involved in reciprocal interaction expressing their gratitude through any acknowledgement of appreciation. Gratitude is defined by McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang (2002) as “a general tendency to recognize and respond with grateful emotion to the roles of other people’s benevolence in the positive experiences and outcomes that one obtains” (p. 112). In line with this definition, gratitude is conceptualized as an affective response, which arises from the recognition of a benefit received from a benefactor. The study showed accordance with past researches that have studied daily and weekly gratitude in relationship with daily and weekly life satisfaction where the results revealed that the higher the gratitude that an individual experienced at a given moment, the higher the life satisfaction s/he had at the same moment (Chen, Wu, & Chen, 2015) (Algoe, Gable, & Maisel, 2010) (Kashdan, Uswatte, & Julian, 2006). For example, Barcelona S.C. fans were so satisfied by the organization of the Yellow Night event that most of the interaction were such as “What a beautiful Yellow night congratulations to its organizers”, “Congratulations Luis Francisco and the entire board. Excellent strategy. Let’s go Idol”, “Thank you for the

happiness you gave us.. A hug still being the example of all” (see Appendix 5.).

Also, in accordance with Emmons & McCullough (2003) gratitude is a positive emotion that stems from an experience of a positive outcome, intentionally provided by another person, firm or organization. For instance, interactions of gratitude toward the board of directors or managers were noted as “Excellent management JOSE FRANCISCO and CARLOS ALEJANDRO the Barcelonista country will ever congratulate you both”, “I admire you mr Esteban Paz congratulations to the leader ALBO thanks for being in the U”, “Thanks to the board of directors for the sacrifice of contract a good coach and players, the fans grated to you; regards”, “I am not barcelonista I am LIGUISTA OF HEART but I congratulate to the board of directors from BSC for bringing a SOCCER EMINENCE as RONALDINHO and to all his fans for making so warm his stay here”, (see Appendix 5.).

Other interactions of gratitude were focus to special events organized by the teams. The most representative was from Barcelona S.C., in which they signed a contract with Ronaldhino Gaucho to play a friendly match in the Yellow Night event. The history of this soccer player is so representative for fans that they fell fullfilled in this special event. Examples



of these interaction towards the soccer player were “Thank ronaldinho by raising the self-esteem of barcelona players because everyone will want to be a big crack as your. To be great our players need to leave everyhting on the court”, “Thank you ronaldhino you are great thank you for wear the biggest Ecuadorian shirt of my club Barcelona I hope you return soon to continue wearing the yellow”, “thanks Dinho for your valuable time on this great team”, “thanks ronaldinho for having played in My Barcelona of My Soul you are amazing”, “Thanks for making soccer the best sport and more with your presence, we fullfilled a dream ti watch you playing in our team BSC it was the best... YOUR HUMILITY IS WHAT IS IMPORTANT” (see Appendix 5.). Also, Liga Universitaria de Quito’s players, coach, and board of directors were invited to have dinner with the Ecuadorian President due to congratulate them for the three international cups won on 2008, 2009, and 2010. Fans from Liga Universitaria de Quito were interacting with comments as “Thanks presi for the invitation to the America’s champion you are the best let’s go. My Liga” the lower interactions of gratitude were from C.S. Emelec compared to the other two teams, some examples are “Thanks my explosion”, “Congratulations, my Emelec, thanks.” (see Appendix 5.).

The word cloud gratitude by Nvivo software revealed that among all the gratitude statements the most common words were “thanks”, “congratulations”, “thank”, “congratulate”, “gratitude”, “happiness” (see Figure 8.), these words are related with acknowledgement of appreciation. Finally, they study showed that among the other four types of social media fan motivation found, gratitude was the lower interacted.



Figure 8. Gratitude Word Cloud

## **Chapter 5. Discussion**

### **5.1. Theoretical Implications**

This research contributes to the literature by extending the previous studies in fan motivation, and better on in the social media context.

Firstly, it contributes to the generalization of the four-social media fan motivation found in the research by Stavros et al. (2014), bringing greater clarity and meaning with the perspective of other sport, country, and culture. In addition, a new motive (gratitude) was found in this research, which highlights the opportunity for a more focused look into the role of customer gratitude in making relationship marketing investments successful where past studies have indicated that feeling gratitude has the potential to encourage future economic exchanges and produce positive relational outcomes (Fazal-E-Hasan, Lings, Neale, & Mortimer, 2014) (Morales, 2005) (Soscia, 2007). Furthermore, gratitude motive contribute to a broaden understanding of the Affect Theory of Social Exchange by Lawler (2001) that suggests about consumers' experiencing appropriate relationship investments by the retailer perceive their relationship with the retailer to be a successful social exchange, and this results in positive emotions such as gratitude.

Secondly, the study contributes to the emerging social media researches in how to optimize social media usage and ensure interactivity. Moreover, it contributes to the lack of social media researches in sport in Latin America where the majority of social media researches in sport derives from the North America perspective (Filo, Lock, & Karg, 2015). For this reason, helps to understand the sport fandom in Latin America as well.

Thirdly, from the consumer perspective the study identified Facebook as a good online channel for satisfy fan motives due to its uncommon setting for sport fans to express their exposure and affinity to any sport related matter or even for interact with any other topic within the community. They study agrees that social media is an excellent two-way communication tool for consumers and sports organizations. Nowadays, the online consumer engagement is important for companies that would like to build their brands because it is one of the factors for competitive advantage, and with the new trend of consumers using social media to express both positive and negative opinions, it is worth to understand their user-generated contents to generate business strategies.

Finally, the research contributes to the importance of understanding interaction, which is the beginning of the engagement process between sports organizations and fans, to reach and maintain successful relational

exchanges. In fact, it contributes to the importance of relationship marketing for sports organizations where the long-term relationships with organizational stakeholders has become necessary.

## **5.2. Managerial Implications**

Understanding what motives sport fans to interact in online channels allows sport managers to guide their social media operations by pointing better marketing strategies. Moreover, it could provide better understandings of consumer perceptions of organizational uses or identify opportunities for team related matters to take advantage of their social media channels to engage with fans preferences.

These motives of passion, hope, self-esteem, camaraderie, and gratitude are core values to create an effective communication tool for long-term investments. Also, they make simple targeting specific fan groups at a minimal cost. Some examples are:

Passion, it is where fans seek to tell everyone about what they love or like and social media facilitates the measurement of brand awareness through this. For example, fans that most generate interactions could be targeted to improve the brand awareness. In addition, passionate fans can support next big idea of sport organizations through using strong language

strategies such as word as “important” or “unique”. Finally, passionate fans enjoy to watch or read news from their teams and talk about their passions.

Hope allows to identify fans expectations, desires, and faiths; sport managers could run surveys to find out what would like fans for the next season or even take the example from Amazon.com, Inc. where consumers are allow to post which product wish to have and another consumer could buy it as a gift to him/her.

Self-esteem is where fans interact with their knowledge and expertise about sports or management related matters, and if they feel can influence your business or goals is a powerful thing. For example, requesting fans their ideas and recommendations regularly about strategies, tactics, or events will maintain their engagement with teams.

Camaraderie gives to social media platforms the characteristic of a trustable source of information for and by fans. Sports organizations could use this as a tool for maintain a good relationship among fans, it could create a foundation for internal networking and new friendships among fans. For instance, making live games or contests that generates interaction among fans where personal information such as their hobbies, interests, favorite players, and so on are ways to increase the identification with team and fellow fans. Those bonds help to create a feeling of family.

Gratitude, it is a boost for the other motives because fan gratitude may explain the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of customer-directed relationship investments, so sport managers should focus on activities designed to generate higher levels of fan gratitude towards the sport organization. For example, making raffles among fans for dinner with players, bringing public figures such as artists, famous soccer players, etc.

Finally, this study showed that Self-Esteem and Camaraderie were the most used types of social media fan motivation, in consequence sports managers could focus their strategies in these categories to exercise their relationship marketing. Furthermore, Facebook Pages showed to be a good vehicle of feedback for the promotions done by sports organizations.

Indeed, as seen in the Chapter 4 fans enjoy having a valued opinion and being an active online member, sport managers should create avenues for Facebook Fan Pages users to have an integral role in the team and management development.

### **5.3. Limitations and Future Research**

The period analyzed in this research was a limitation to the amount of data collected because Ecuadorian soccer teams have different dates to present their special event before the new season, so it is important to admit that this research was embarked upon two-week before the new season

where the selected teams presented their special event in different dates and the promotion will depend on each date. Therefore, this period could be settle by each promotion's date of the special event, so additional categories of motivation may emerge due to more interaction by fans.

Second, the quantity of selected teams was a limitation in this study because were selected the most popular soccer teams in Ecuador but additional categories may emerge with more teams or different type of selection of teams. For example, Ecuadorian teams that will play in international leagues or cups.

Third, further research should address other social media platforms because during the preliminary stage of collecting data, it was noted that teams are using Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and Snapchat where additional categories of motivation may emerge.

Another further research should address categories of motivation by gender to understand male and female motivations, so marketing strategies will focus on different markets.

Lastly, it is necessary to take studies on each category of motivation for a deeply understanding of fans. For instance, gratitude motivation should be addressed in how effects the long-term fan-sport organization relationship.



## **5.4. Conclusion**

This study on Facebook Pages showed the different types of motives that fans exercise through wall posts and comments with their teams.

Passion, hope, self-esteem, camaraderie, and gratitude were motives found during the off-season of the Ecuadorian Serie A where fans felt so freely to express their sentiments to their teams and fan community. Furthermore, it was noted that some motives were used more than others, and which are the common words most used by each one. Also, gratitude was the new type of motive not identified before in the literature that will help to understand better the role of consumer gratitude in making relationship marketing investments successful. Lastly, it was noted how social media usage has increased in the past years but even with the proliferation of new platforms, Facebook is still the most used social network platform until now due to its interactive social features provided for users, consumers, and fans. As a result, Facebook demonstrated to be a great tool for elaborate relationship marketing strategies by sports organizations.

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## Appendix

### Appendix 1. Examples of Passion Social Media Fan Motivation Type

i love d club, up BACA !!!
Let's go Idol... go with all!!
Barcelona is the best in bad and good I will never stop being Barcelonista I love you ;*
Let's go champions
Barcelona the father
Barcelona is unique 100%
barca is best club in the world :* and this site is amazing <3 wow :* <3 we are cules <3 we are one :* <3
I love you my club
You are the biggest from Ecuador whoever get hurt 100 per 100 Barcelona
Barcelona always the best...
No bigger heart than a BARCELONIST
Soul... life and heart... My idol forever...
I love you barcelona
My passion... my feelings... my soul... my blood color... just you Barcelona my idol
I carry the passion inside me I am Idol since I born one idol have Ecuador p. Barce
GET UP MY BARCELONA LET'S BEAT ALL LITTLE TEAMS...! I SAY TO TO YOU EMEGUEY...!
Idol how do I explain how much I love you
Barcelonista till the eternity sur oscura
Forever Idol
I lOvE YoU BarcelonA.. <3
Barcelona is the best always
BARCELONA IS THE BEST THAT COULD HAVE ECUADOR
GO FOR IT Barcelona from Ecuador
Let's left our life for these colors!!
LET'S GO TEAM!!!
This is my BARCE
This is my idol
LET'S GO!
From Cuenca here. Supporting and encouraging at least from here... you are my biggest passion in this world... thanks... for EXIST.....
WARRIORS... #TOGETHERFORTHE15
One idol in my heart BARCELONA Of my love
Sunday. Even it rains with thunders and lightning I will go to supporting you my forever Idol <3
Champions are many, IDOL is just one BARCELONA SC
Idol as Barcelona S.C there is none
Parties like this just Barcelona LIVE IT

Let's go my barce...
Like the Fenix...
You are the great idol from Ecuador
GOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOAL Ctm
Mena Matamoros, Matamoros Mena... GOOOOOOOOOOOOOOAL of MENA :o/
Club Sport Emelec 1x0 #Ucatolica
I am 100% emelecista till my dead
I love you emelec
I love you with my soul emelec
Let's go again
Forever EMELecSisTA
So beautiful my bombillo
100 percent emelecista
Emelec until the end of the world I love you
All Ecuadorians from Miami are from Emelec !!
Miami is here, Let's go Emelec !!
Take it easy whatever they say be strength my emelec because we will win on Friday
Let's go let's go emelec
And you see it. And you see it. It's the best team emelec. Go for the tetrachampionship
EMELEC MUAA I LOVE YOU!!!
I love you emelec. Keep training
GO FOR IT EMELEC
Let's go EMELEC you can accomplish the goal with soul and heart (libertadores, sudamericana, tetracampeon) sincerely: fan of EMELEC
The bombillo is the best of Ecuador
I love you with my entire soul emelec
My dear emelec tri champion
GOOOOOOOOOOAL fuck you
Better than never to shout it out
Let's go Alianza lima champions until the end
The best of the world alianza lima
Well done alianza lima
This is ALIANZA LIMA ♥
Alianzaaaaaaa! <3
WELL DONE ALIANZA FOR SOMETHING YOU ARE NOT THE BEST TEAM OF PERU... BE STRONG GRONES
We are Aliancistas.... From my heart my child!!!
This is my alianza lima fuck yeah
Let's go alianza
Go for it alianza
<3
LET'S GO!!! We can make it...
GREAT AS ALWAYS FUCK YOU!!!
WELL WON WITH SO MUCH ATTITUDE FROM THE ALIANZA TEAM
GREATINGS FROM AN EMELEC FAN
How it has to be

#alianzalima
#towin
Emelec champion
EMELEC MY LIFE MY PASSION
#markthedifference 100% blue
#markthedifference great my emelec
My blue passion
#markthedifference blue is the color
Let's go liga
Go for it my liga we are winning
1 to 0 it won your father!!! Goal of cachete morales
My liga I couldn't watch you but my heart was beating for you
Cheers my liga, like this till the end of the league. Keep forward and don't let your guard down
Liga is Liga fuck you!
It won my team Fuck!
Smells like 2008.!!!
Liguita mine
Liguita \U/
You are great LDQ
A clap for the most beautiful team I am liga from <3
We start with the right foot. This is my liga
This is called premier team yes or yes ligistas from heart go for it
How I could not love you, if you are my life that's why I'll never leave you. This year is white. Let's go my LIGA
Liga your husband forever
Liga I love you!!
My liga my life <3 you are everything for me #kingofcups
Be strong liga. You are the best
BEAUTIFUL team BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE cheers L.D.U
Full liguista

## Appendix 2. Examples of Hope Social Media Fan Motivation Type

Let's go with more attitude to win the championship this year guys
B.S.C ☐the best good luck Idol for the #15
LET'S GO BARCELONA WE HAVE TO BE CHAMPIONS THIS YEAR
It is the 2016 champhion
We have to start with the right foot
We have an excellent squad for not just being champion in Ecuador although we can be champion in the Libertadores
Let's go Ismael let's start with the right foot I hope this is your year
This year we are going to be champions with the Blanco's goals
Let's go for the 15 Ismael you are great Idol
Blessings for this year, for you and the team!! (Y)
On Sunday you will do a HAT TRICK!
WE WILL WIN UNTIL DEAD
Let's go my Barcelona for the 15
Bring ETOOOOOOOO!!!
BRIIIIIING ETOOOOOOOO PLEASE!!
This Sunday we will win to el nachito let's go my Barcelona yes you can
Yes like this my Barcelona this year let's be champion of the 2 cups
LET'S GO CEVALLOS AND ALFARO FOR THE HIRING OF DINHO AND KAKA
Hopefully someday the stadium will be as the CAMP NOU
I hope everything goes well for the yellow people
Thanks Master.... We'll wait your return... BSC forever....!!!!
Now this year we are going to be champions with RONALDINH
Let's go Barcelona
Barcelona is always the best for the ☆15
Keep playing in Barcelona
COME BACK TO ECUADOR! Ronaldinho Gaucho !! COME BACK
You are so great my friend Ronaldinho God bless you and we will wait you forever
My dream is to see Ronaldinho
GOOD STARTED MY BARCELONA LET'S GO FOR THE 2016 VICTORY
GO FORWARD GUYS THIS YEAR IS OURS!
Hope doesn't lose
Keep playing with strength to accomplish our goal
I am waiting for the yellow night mi Barcelona <3
THE 15 STAR IS OURS BSC
Let's go captain
All for the 15!!!
Let's fill the colossun of America
Well said cevallos let's go to be champions this year for the 15 we are the best team from the Ecuador Only one Idol tomorrow the yellow night will be amazing let's go everybody to the stadium tomorrow
I want to go
I WILL BE THERE

HOPEFULLY THIS TIME WE WIN JEJEJE
Hopefully someday he will come to play in PERU as well.
WITH THE BLESSINGS FROM GOD WE ARE GOING TO BE CHAMPIONS THIS YEAR..... IDOL!!!!!!! 2016
You are great #Barcelona Whatever they say the B.S.C people is the best and we will go for the #15 Idol 2016 championship is ours let's go!
To Emelecistas today we win 2 – 1
The goal is to be American Champion
Let's go for the tetra
We will continue being champions
Let's go for the first victory
Let's go for the first 3 points
Concentration, strength, encouragement, technique, and brave heart to the unfirm. This 2016 will be better or same as the last year. Let's go for the fourth. Let's go CHAMPIONS.
Also this year we have to be champions we have to be unstoppable
This year we are champions
Go forward my bombillo you will be champion until 2020
Let's go my lovely team. To be champions this year.
We have the best team from the country and this year we go for the libertadores
Let's go emelec this year is the libertadores let's go bombillo
Let's go emelec to be champions again
On the way to the tetrachampionship
Let's go for the fourth my bombillo
Let's make other achievement emelec as every year
Like this we have to play always to win the libertadores
Let's go my emelec, like this we win again
Let's go my emelec for the 14 star
Go forward my team this year give us an international championship
Good luck my team God bless you all and let's win the tournaments
Starts to be felt the trichampion bombillo champion again
Let's go emelec for other cup
Starting so well this year Let's go trichampion for the credife 2016 cup and to achieve an international title
You are great emelec now we just have to win on 30 at Lima
Let's win the game my emelec let's win
Let's go blues this afternoon we have to win
Let's go to win my emelec
I will love Emelec until I will die let's go bombillo be prepare on Wednesday lima because we go with everything
Let's go to win emelec
Let's go champion let's win to alianza lima
Let's go for other star
Let's go bombillo we want the 14
Well done. Congratulations..
This year let's go for the cup

Undoubtedly Dida Dominguez is the best goalkeeper of Ecuador Be strong **\U/** This year we will win everything
You are great Dominguez keep like this because this year is ours
Be strong Borghi the league is going to start, for now it's not logic to judge. Let's go Liga, this year we are going to be champions
This year we will be champions
Well done for the first game we have to begin winning
This is the attitude this year we are going to be champions again in the libertadores
Alvez with the U in your heart the fans would like to see you wearing the King of cups liga's uniform KEEP ALVEZ PLEASE
This year we will bring a cup from outside Ecuador
Hello #LigaDeportivaUniversitariadeEcuador! ♥♥♥ I am just a few days of my birthday! The best gift you could give me it's the signed t-shirt by all players from #LDU!! It would be amazing!! I hope you read my message! It'll be a dream come true! Thank you so much ♥♥♥
Let's start with the right foot liguita on the way to the 15... ;-)
There are missing two REcups!!!!
Let's go liga this year is ours
It's coming a great year for the king of cups #whiteafternoon
THIS YEAR LIGA IS GOING TO BE CHAMPION let's go liga
Let's go #kingofcups this year is ours!!!
We all hope to see you again in the top of the international soccer, and king of cup at home, bless for this tournaments
IT'S NOT AN INVITATION TO DREAM, TODAY IS A REALITY WE HAVE TO SUPPORT OUR INSTITUTION THIS YEAR IS GOING TO BE LIGUISTA YOU ARE GREAT KING OF CUPS
Let's go my people this year we are champions... LIGA KING OF CUPS AND LET'S GO FOR OTHER...
WE WANT TO SEE LIGA AS A WORLD CHAMPION
Let's go liga for the championship
Good luck albos' warriors

### Appendix 3. Examples of Self-Esteem Social Media Fan Motivation

#### Type

Blanco long time ago is 1 less on the field he's very slow for the intelligence of diaz
Perhaps yes because he's a brave forward and very persistent but a little undisciplined
With less sponsors the t-shirt looks better like this... not like in the yellow night as formula 1 uniform
That t-shirt looks great, without many sponsors
I give him 10 games (5 at home and 5 away). Minimum he has to win 20 points, if not, we will start the campaign #GetoutAlmada
they don't have good game... I am barcelonista but I don't have trust in this coach... I'm sorry but don't be passion and be realistic... but perhaps I am wrong about what I've said...
I said like this Banguera Velasco Marquez Aimar pineida Minda Castillo Diaz Penilla Lino Blanco
The defense worries me it were 3 goals because of the whole defenders
Amazing mi barce it works as a watch with dinho it will be better if he come back to see the colossun the america's return
It was great the yellow night we need a centre-back and about dinho I see it complicated
Thank you Master we fulfilled the objective... to pay debts due to the last board of directors that doesn't love the team... the only thing they did, it was ruin the team
Winning 4-3 to a team that ever fight for going to second league of peru, it's not playing well with Ronaldinho
PLEASE GET A CENTRAL-BACK WE SERIOUS NEED IT, THE PARTY WAS OUTSTAING
The fans answered to the board of directors and players.. congratulations it was the best yellow night that I have the honor to attend it doesn't matter how much the t-shirt costs 10 20 30 dollars let's continue supporting fellow fans barcelonistas... cheer Barcelona
Shishiii it's not going to be televised the game
I can get it but for some people that cannot get it, it should be televised
It was a great show the night before the stadium was full as never before in history
Cevallos you have compleety full the stadium you have full sponsors don't be like this and open the signal for the whole country the people and the yellow people
Sirs. Besides who wrote the comment did a shit spelling, and he gave me 10 different kinds of cancer.
In my opinion he's right about one thing. to Ronaldinho doesn't matter soccer long time ago, in his time he was an indisputable ace; but now he's not in good condition; and they have him overrated.
I'm sorry for being cruel, Gaucho in his time was my favorite soccer player, but it's time for retirement.



In this 2 months he let them win the double investment for him... What I say double? Triple...
To whom it concerns if you win 1.6M in tickets, 100M in a dinner and 320M in t-shirts sell? Barcelona lives sunk in a financial crisis created by the worst board of directors that never knew how to exploit the brand for the team benefit. WITOUT DOUBT IT HAS BEEN GOOD THE ARRIVED OF DIHNO
With the half bachelor Cevallos Barcelona will go to the ground It's a person without preparation and money to spend
With all respect but before they were people with "more preparation" and money, and they just left Barcelona on the bankruptcy border. At least now you can see coherence in what he does.
It's good the management of the board of directors, like this we're going to be a prestige's institution and for that assholes that just criticizes, this is called MARKETING... it's an exhibition for the YELLOW night... assholes...
Until when this Herrera it's time to fire him
I listened on the radio that cost \$25 it's beautiful and comes with posters cd songs of the moment and the whole highline of the tri... in addition comes with 380 pages, it is an affordable price because should be \$60
WE NEED A 9... A GOAL SCORER... WE HAVE A GOOD SQUAD BUT IT IS VISIBLE THAT WE NEED SOMEONE THAT HAS GOOD SHOOT IN FRONT OF THE GOAL... HOPEFULLY ABOUT STRAKA DOESN'T BE OTHER SPECULATION AND THEY BRING HIM BACK... EMELEC HAS THE RESOURCES TO PAY AN EXCELLENT PLAYER... INVEST AND SEE HOW YOU WILL BE AT THE FINALS... HEY DOND NEME... COVER THE WHOLE TEAM AREAS BECAUSE EMELEC IS OBLIGATED TO BRING THE LIBERTADORES CUP THIS YEAR...
Why you don't hire Alves he is out from Liga, he is a good player, Strength my Bombillo.
What a desperation is to know that we don't have a player who knows how to score goals for the first game....
Club Sport Emelec in the paseo shopping where the tickets for the game are being sell they gave us bad consumer attention 1.- besides he arrived one and a half hour late 2.- he was rude 3.- he doesn't look the line order 4.- he demanded to pay with complete cash because he hadn't had change THE WORD RESPECT IS HUGE
We have an excellent squad to continue playing the league and be the best in the libertadores
What a goal!
Ahhaaaha you win because it was a friendly game and emelec changed all the starters for the half time
It was a game with much suspense but we knew how to win in the half time thanks to ibañez and the whole squad this year yes or yes we get all championships let's go alianza <3
WE SEE AT LIMA – YOU ARE INVITED TO THE BLANQUIAZUL PARTY!! IT'S GONNA BE SPECTACULAR LET'S GO ALIANZA LIMA <3
Well played emelec guanca mena matomoros gaibor pedro well done defenders good right-back he needs more to learn and nazareno looks like a good player that goes for the border

so much but Herrera is bad so slow and doesn't play well we really need a player that goes well with the team
It's so good this t-shirt, simple without many sponsors with the elegant touch that characterizes the Adidas brand! Let's go Emelec!
IT'S SO SIMPLE THE T-SHIRT, SINCERELY.... BUT IT'S OKAY... IT DOESN'T MATTER THE DESIGN... IT MATTERS THE WELL PLAY OF EMELEC.....
The Adidas logo should be at the right side it doesn't convince me but it's okay
Adidas could be stamped where is Huawei
ADIDAS just gives stars to international championships
Adidas is always classic design, if you compare with River from Argentina, Emelec is much better
The board of directors is good, but the corporate field is a shit...don't bring us with corporate campaigns it's gonna be worst
What a shame we all wanted to watch our team playing in milagro we count on that. Besides fans are fans and we follow you wherever you go
Great Dida... to my opinion it's time to be an goalkeeper from an international team...
We need cachetes morales
Counting Aleman, there are now 6 players from Liga for the 2016 that were in the ideal team from the 2015 league.
6 from 11?
Ah, it's true!! But besides that there are many other players from Liga in the ideal team
LOOKS LIKE ALVEZ WILL PLAY IN VELEZ SARFIELD
Esteban hopefully you don't be wrong in your decisions and hire a better player as alvez
Alvez in my opinion was the only forward good that we had for a long time ago hopefully the coach doesn't regret with the respect to Carlos Tenorio but he is lost in the team.
ALVEZ>Tenorio
Bad to mix the team with politics
This is the correct way to attend not as emeecsistas with smurf pijamas hahaha... hopefully Correa doesn't give us bad luck...
DON'T INCLUDE LIGA IN POLITICS***
The t-shirt is amazing without sponsors
It's a big error that nobody figured out letting play julio ayovi on the left and romero on the right, a team with speed will destroy that defense, much better will be canga on the right Araujo and romero, other that is wrong there is vega on the left and tenorio is so slow, the team has good changes but hopefully it's for the good of the team
Why you didn't do White Night it was better than White afternoon :( :( :( :( :( :( :( :( :(
The truth is that I don't know why puch is in the reserve, he should play as starter, didn't you watch the game from yesterday? GOD, HE PLAYED SO WELL BESIDES THE SHORT TIME GIVEN TO HIM.
I like how the team was started, the players look motivated, wonderful WHITE AFTERNOON!!!
They have to take in mind open the general exit for the leaving of the fans, in this way will be fast and comfortable, thanks to whom may it concern.
Excellent strategy, good players.
What a shame! It was not televised
Good team game :like:

Aleman deserves it he plays well and gives good passes

## Appendix 4. Examples of Camaraderie Social Media Fan Motivation

### Type

In which stadium are going to play?
Alves to Barcelona is confirmed
Can you help me when is going to play Barcelona
At what time does the idol play and start at home or away
ALVEZ IS A BSC PLAYER PEOPLE!!!
Which is the situation of Federico Nieto?
I ask what happen with Federico Nieto...? Does the player belong to the Club or not?
Which is the 2015 best goal video? Share the link
I would like to be associate of my team..??
How could I be associate I am from Guayaquil
!!!! IN QUITO CITY WHERE CAN I BE ASSOCIATE!!!!
When in quito
Hey I have 2 north general tickets for the Sunday's game who would be interested
Hello brother I am interested
How are you doing my friend I ask the same price I payed 7 each one
At the B.S.C. monumental stadium from 8:00 am to 17:00 pm
Where does it work the soccer school for children in Guayaquil?
Where can I pick up my associated credential?
Yes but he will never wear your blue shit of t-shirt remember that BSC is your father smurf shitty
Hey learn to write that embarrass us
Emegay detected
Beauty could you add me to your friend contacts
Somebody help me... In which website can I watch the yellow night reprise with the entire game please...
Hello help me with the address of the Barcelona museum
Somebody knows why the Barcelona t-shirt does not have many sponsors as the yellow night
Is the bill with coach Benito Floro payed?
I ordered a whisky with coca cola... I know it doesn't make sense I did it to get your attention :v xD
<p>"I start with the name Of ALLAH who is most merciful"</p> <p>Accept that there is none worthy of worship but ALLAH. Accept that Moses,Jesus and Mohammad(Peace be upon them) are the Servants and Messengers of ALLAH and Mohammad (peace be upon him) is the last messenger Of ALLAH. And ALLAH has no idol,no picture,no photo.</p> <p>Accept Islam In Shaa Allah you will get Jannah (paradise/heaven) . Otherwise ALLAH will put you in Hell.</p>

Remove misunderstandings about Islam, read Holy Quran.
I am from India. I have no money. But, I love football. I like Football. Football is my life. Football is my dream. Chance only for rich. So How can India Qualified World cup??
Barcelona VS Atletico Madrid <a href="http://bit.ly/1WofVh3">http://bit.ly/1WofVh3</a> <a href="http://bit.ly/1PLCeo2">http://bit.ly/1PLCeo2</a>
Friday February 5 <sup>th</sup> emelec vs catolica pm 19.30
Who says if tomorrow are selling the tickets for the game
Tickets available from today
BROTHER I AM FROM MANTA WHERE CAN I BUY THE BOOK
It's beautiful I sell in my store!!....
You can buy the Blue Book for USA at <a href="http://www.tiendafutbolecuador.com/emelec">www.tiendafutbolecuador.com/emelec</a> The launch of the Blue Book will be in: Casa Ecuatoriana – New York 24-15 Queens Plaza North Long Island City, NY 11101 This Friday February 5 <sup>th</sup> at 18h00, don't miss it!
It is missing at Los Angeles. Ecuadorians are living here too.
I am going to be at U ☺
Would you let me know from which age children pays ticket or if it is 2x1 for them, and which location is that one behind the reserve seats. Thanks for the information you will share it
We are so in debt with china That correa sold miller :D
Greetings from Lima – Peru, it greets other great as Alianza Lima nice to have played with the trichampion of Ecuadorian Soccer, a hug from distance!!!
Alianza lima my team from peru greetings hugs from chile to you my Peruvians brothers
Jajajajajaja :3
Pppffffff
How many is the stadium capacity?
36,000. Spectators
Thanks for the info
Where can I buy the green t-shirt?
ALIANZA LIMA VS EMELEC LIVE in directv sports <a href="http://bit.ly/1PpTA7R">http://bit.ly/1PpTA7R</a>
CLIC LICK IF YOU LIKE ECUADORIAN SOCCER <a href="https://www.facebook.com/elfutbolero.ec/?ref=hl">https://www.facebook.com/elfutbolero.ec/?ref=hl</a>
HELLO EMELECISTA FRIENDS FROM CUENCA ENTER TO THIS WEBSITE FOR PLAYING SOCCER ON WEEKENDS AND FREE TIMES
Hahaha we have the same race culture, take it easy European, for Christmas I will gift you a mirror
For sure you are from Barcelona... ignorant
Greetings Ecuador...
Who scored the goals?
Link for watching the blue explosion
Kevin look!
Buy to me!

It is the official hahaha
The other stadium ticket works as well
Thanks brother your information use as much
ARE FREE TICKETS?
Is not on 26 the presentation??
Where is Alvez??
Support our campaign <a href="https://www.facebook.com/Que-tu-%C3%BAnica-arma-sea-tu-grito-1040132712711391/?notif_t=page_fan">https://www.facebook.com/Que-tu-%C3%BAnica-arma-sea-tu-grito-1040132712711391/?notif_t=page_fan</a>
Like if you don't see dida at first hahaha
New *O* Romantic Rap <3 Listen & Share *-* <a href="https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=Yh9ntY5v-MA">https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=Yh9ntY5v-MA</a>
I want to play there
We invitee you to vote for the best #ConnieJimenez #MissEcuador <a href="https://www.facebook.com/MissEcuadorOficial/photos/a.462353470447671.128369.448750588474626/1247495605266783/?type=3">https://www.facebook.com/MissEcuadorOficial/photos/a.462353470447671.128369.448750588474626/1247495605266783/?type=3</a>
I don't know why is not there. Would you mind to explain me please?
What is cevallos doing there?
AND BARCELONA AND EMELEG DOESN'T EXIST WHAT HAPPENED WHY IS JUST LIGA INVITED
Somebody knows if this week on Monday 8 there is train for liga formatives please
In which channel is televised the game delfin vs liga?
I have a question alves was at lunch with the president?
ENVY KILLS YOU RAFAEL CORREA haaaah YOUR TEAM WILL NEVER HAVE ONE OF THAT CUPS
It's not more clear spoken men, greetings.
Selling powerful medicine man to make love with women more durable. Call mynumber : 081215928989 or visit the myweb : <a href="http://www.waroengherbalkuat.blogspot.com">www.waroengherbalkuat.blogspot.com</a>
Please the price
Is it possible to obtain signed to send to Miguel Orletti ex player from LDU?
Somebody could tell me where can I buy the t-shirt?
I want the blue away t-shirt... but I went to marathon and there is not one, somebody can tell me where can I buy it. Thanks
I live in USA how can I obtain a t-shirt
Hey in Spain where can I buy it????
There aren't t-shirts in Guayaquil and more unlikely the away t-shirt and the few that arrives it finishes fast it is more limited why?
Somebody can help with information about when liga plays libertadores
How ended the game?
AdC 1 – 0 LDU
Vote for the captain. <3
At what time does liga play against America de cali..?
Which are the players that stay at home?
Which is the phone number to call directv
Game liga vs America de cali..... <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=30Xz2qcI82A">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=30Xz2qcI82A</a>
Hello friends HOPEFULLY YOU CAN HELP ME, I am super fan and soliciting an extra

ticket for my grandson, but NO answer trough the Portal, next to me there is a free seat that he could easy take it he is 3 years old and scream more than me!!!!)
--

Which is the benefit buying with Discover?
--

## Appendix 5. Examples of Gratitude Social Media Fan Motivation Type

What a beautiful Yellow night congratulations to its organizers
Congratulations Luis Francisco and the entire board. Excellent strategy. Let's go Idol
The best yellow night.. Thanks to the board of directors.. In safe hands..
Congratulations to the board of directors it was an spectacular night my barce
Congratulations to the board of directors excellent organization may God will it is to obtain the 15!! Let's go Idol.
Thank ronaldinho by raising the self-esteem of barcelona players because everyone will want to be a big crack as you. To be great our players need to leave everything on the court
Thank you for the happiness you gave us..
A hug still being the example of all
Thank you ronaldinho you are great thank you for wear the biggest Ecuadorian shirt of my club Barcelona I hope you return soon to continue wearing yellow
Thanks Dinho for your valuable time on this great team
It is beautiful to see a stadium completely full, always to be like this, CONGRATULATIONS TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS. AND TO FANS WHO ACCOMPANIED IN THE YELLOW NIGHT
Congratulations Barcelona, Congratulations Ecuador .. wonderful fans of Barcelona, I am Flamengo Fan, I come here to give my congratulations to this team, success.
Thanks Ronaldinho... it was amazing
Thanks Ronaldinho for having played in My Barcelona of My Soul you are amazing
Thanks master. We hope, this story will continue...
Thanks Ronaldinho for playing in the best team of Ecuador Barcelona the Idol of Ecuador
We love you ronaldinho thanks for the wonderful yellow night and to realize this dream of watching you playing in my team the Barcelona you are the best of the world you are my idol of the idol
Thanks for giving so much happiness to the club we hope it is not the last time
Thanks to you one million blessings thanks for having played in the best team of Ecuador I love you so much
Dinho thanks for accompanying us in this yellow night
Thanks to you for contribution in BARCELONA
Nobody like you thanks for this wonderful yellow night
Thanks to you my beloved Ronaldinho
THANKS Ronaldinho Gaúcho FOR PLAYING IN THE YELLOW NIGHT IN THE GREATEST OF ECUADOR Barcelona of Ecuador
Great. Ronaldinho. Thanks for the happiness you gave us. And more thankful for having fulfilled the dream of my son to see you so closer. You are his idol.
thank you
Thank you!!! Ronaldinho!!
Thank you for everything crack!!! This is your house where you always are welcome BSC
I am not barcelonista I am LIGUISTA OF HEART but I congratulate to the board of directors from BSC for bringing an SOCCER EMINENCE as RONALDINHO and to all his fans for making so warm his stay here



Thanks to the board of directors for the sacrifice of contract a good coach and players, the fans grated to you; regards
Congratulations to my liga for left everything on the court and gave happiness to fans ♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥☆♥♥♥☆
I admire you mr Esteban Paz congratulations to the leader ALBO thanks for being in the U A pride of Ecuador, the best goalkeeper today. Thanks for all victories that you have given in the Liga and in the National team. Blessings
Congratulations guys go ahead and good luck
How much we enjoyed from the quality of Alex Escobar! Good luck in your life, a gentleman player. Forever with LIGA in his heart.
Excellent player, We owe you much Alex all the fans of Ligueta, a hug
Thanks presi for the invitation to the America's champhion you are the best let's go My Liga
Congratulations my favorite goalkeeper!! :*
You are great my dear dida congratulations
Congratulations alba people ☺
☺ great "U" congratulations guys
Congratulations Dida you are great
Congratulations Alexander
Congratulations DIDA, good luck in this championship
Congratulations my team EMELEC continue so until the end more champion For the players, God bless you all
Thanks my explosion
Congratulations, my Emelec, thanks.
Thanks bombillo
Congratulations, Bombillo
Thanks my Emelec you are my life
Excellent management JOSE FRANCISCO and CARLOS ALEJANDRO the Barcelonista country will ever congratulate you both
Congratulations to the big Barcelonista family because this is what we are, the bad attitudes have to be behind and some people actions that wear our t-shirt. Our people came to the call of his team and it was felt as it should be, the board of directors' objective planned was fulfilled, it was a hard unique act to beat. Great our Barce...!!!
Congratulations this is my Barcelona of my heart
Thanks to the board of directors for allowing that ecuavisa send the signal of the yellow night I will be soon in Guayaquil and I will go to the monumental and I will buy 5 extra tickets in every game I will stay because of my gratitude
A success thanks for your management pepe panchooo
It doesn't matter wich t-shirt he wears I can only say thanks.....!!!! He doesn't represent emblems or symbols He is the world soccer represent.....!!!! A GOD OF VISIT TOTAL GRATITUDE.....!!!!
I just want to say thanks ronaldiño for this happiness that you brought to all torero fans and

God continue blessing you and your family
Great Barcelona sporting club idol of Ecuador something like this will never happen again in Ecuador thanks Ronaldinho
Thanks Ronaldinho for continue playing soccer!!!!
THANKS #RONALDINHO FOR MAKING A BEAUTIFUL GAME YOU ARE IN HISTORY OF THE GREATEST ECUADORIAN TEAM #B_S_C WE WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER YOU, EXCELLENT FANS THANKS TO #GOD <3 <3 <3 <3 <3
The Brazilian crack fulfilled the yellow night thanks for this night gabucho
Good envy to Barcelona. Congratulations. What a shame to my Nacional. Hopefully yhe Nachito will be again the only rival of Barcelona
Congratulations to the most popular team in Ecuador my Barcelona
Thanks board of directors million thanks I am overflowing with emotion and pride... Barcelona you are GREAT
Happy birthday Erick Castillo
Thanks champion to play in another champion
Thanks RONALDINHO GAUCHO THE MAGIC 10 for giving us happiness with your humility your magic your virtuosism and wonderful smile thanks for making us cry of emotion happiness with your jogo bonito THANKS RONALDINHO GAUCHO THE KING
Thanks cevallito for the great yellow night it was worth it to pay congratulations
Thanks to board of directors and fans we are going to get it back the colossus of America
Thanks Idol for the best Yellow Night on history
Congratulations beautiful yellow night
Congratulations to the current board of directors big show #nocheamarilla..
Thank you very much for everything #Ronaldinho
The yellow night with you it was more special, thanks!
Mi idol thanks for this happiness I would ever like to meet you and give you a hug
Thanks for playing in the most popular Ecuadorian team as BARCELONA
Thank you very much for giving us this magic master this happiness will be forever one idol have the Ecuador
Thanks for making soccer the best sport and more with your presence, we fulfilled a dream to watch you playing in our team BSC it was the best... YOUR HUMILITY IS WHAT IS IMPORTANT
Thanks to you for a lot of magic happiness and quality thanks for wearing the t-shirt of my soul team thanks for your humility you are the best in history your class technique dribble magic definition nobody had it and nobody has it until now many could win golden boats but there are not like you because you are the last magician from brazil God bless you dhino forever crack
Wonderful Dinho! Thanks
Amazing thanks for coming !!!

국 문 초 록

# 에콰도르 축구 팬의 소셜미디어를 통한 프로 팀과의 상호작용에 대한 탐색적 연구

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소셜 미디어 이상으로 완전한 팬으로서 자신을 표현 할 수 있는  
공간이 또 있을까? 요즘 스포츠 기업들은 팬들과 소통하는데 있어서  
단지 전통적인 매체에만 의존하는 것은 아니다. 기술발전 덕분에  
기업들은 뉴미디어를 통해 팬들을 사로잡을 수 있는 혁신적이고도  
전략적인 기회를 얻을 수 있게 되었다.

뉴미디어의 대표적인 사례인 소셜 미디어는 팬들이 그들의  
팀들과의 중요한 연결고리 역할을 하고 있다. 따라서, 소셜미디어는  
스포츠 기업들은 팬들의 심리를 이해하고 그들과 더 강력한 관계를

형성하기 위한 중요한 역할을 하고 있다 (Stavros, Meng, Westberg, & Farrelly, 2014).

본 연구는 팬들이 페이스북 페이지를 통해 에콰도르 프로축구팀과 소통하는 동기가 무엇인지를 조사함으로써 소셜 미디어 관련 연구에 기여하고 있다. 연구 결과 팬들은 열정, 희망, 자부심, 동지애, 고마움 등 다섯가지 동기를 갖고 있는 것으로 나타났다. 또한 본 연구는 성공적인 관계마케팅에 도달 및 유지하는 결합과정의 초기단계라 할 수 있는 소비자(스포츠 팬)와 스포츠 기업 간 상호작용의 중요성을 보여주고 있다.

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**주요어:** 팬 동기 부여, 스포츠 마케팅, 소셜 미디어, 상호 작용, 관계 마케팅, 프로 축구

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